

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1419728



The Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Property of

Arnold Owen

15
40

DS
121
T9

EGYPT TO CANAAN

OR

LECTURES ON THE SPIRITUAL MEANINGS OF THE EXODUS

BY

A. H. TUTTLE



NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Copyright, 1912, by
A. H. TUTTLE

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO THE FIRST
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF WILKES-
BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA, IN GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF A PEOPLE WHOSE HUNGER FOR BIBLICAL
TRUTH INSPIRED THE PREPARATION OF
THESE DISCOURSES, AND WHO CHEERED THE
HEART OF THEIR PASTOR BY THRONGING
THEIR GREAT TEMPLE THROUGH THE MANY
SUCCESSIVE SUNDAYS OF THEIR DELIVERY.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ISRAEL IN EGYPT.....	9
II. THE PROMISED LAND.....	31
III. THE CALL OF A DELIVERER.....	47
IV. MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH.....	68
V. THE PASSOVER.....	88
VI. THE GOD-WROUGHT DELIVERANCE.....	102
VII. MARAH	121
VIII. MANNA	138
IX. REPHIDIM	154
X. THE ELECT NATION.....	170
XI. THE DECALOGUE.....	195
XII. AARON	210
XIII. THE TABERNACLE.....	225
XIV. THE LEVITICAL LAW.....	241
XV. KADESH-BARNEA	259
XVI. THE DEATH OF MOSES.....	272

PREFACE

THESE studies in the story of the Exodus are offered to the public on the solicitation of many who have been helped in their spiritual life in hearing them delivered from the pulpit. Their form is expository and their purpose is to draw from Israel's pilgrimage the divine meanings which will help us interpret the mysteries of our own.

I have assumed the general historic accuracy of the events that are recorded in the sacred books. Whatever may be said of the material out of which the story is constructed, an unmistakable spiritual truth shines through it all, and it is my aim to keep my steps well within this heavenly light.

The sermons were delivered extemporaneously, and stenographically reported. With but few verbal changes I have committed them to the printed page as they came from my lips. I trust that the spirit of the pulpit may not be entirely lost in the book.

Summit, New Jersey.

I

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Exod. 1. 13: "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor."

THE purpose of the book of Exodus is partly historical and partly spiritual. As a history it aims to trace the deliverance of enslaved Israel by the power of God. But within that history is another purpose—to trace the deliverance of an enslaved soul from its bondage in sin into the perfect liberty of the children of God; and, furthermore, to trace its career through this wilderness world to its God-prepared country in the heavens.

Such is the minute analogy between the historical exodus and the spiritual as to force the conviction that it was designed. Why not? God avowedly fashioned the heavens "to show forth his glory." He made our earthly relationships, such as fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, etc., to make clear to us our spiritual relationships, which would have been inexplicable mysteries and incredible only for the familiar facts in our daily life. We are

expressly taught that "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Why, then, should he not make the history of the revelation people, whom he specially called that he might through them give to the world heavenly truth, a parable of the soul's history to the end of time? Such he has done. Here we have a history within a history. The story of the exodus is a panorama of things more tremendous than the exodus itself. Its persons and events are symbols and types of the movements of divine grace in the human soul. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10. 11).

Egypt stands among the nations of the Bible story as a type of this world. When I say type I do not mean simply that it was an illustration or a particular instance of the world life. That may be said of Rome, or America, or any other great country. But it was a prearranged fact, designed for that very purpose. What God said of Egypt's king is true also of the land he ruled: "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared

throughout all the earth." Just as Babylon was a type of spiritual wickedness, and as Jerusalem was a type of the mystical church, so Egypt was a type of this world. There we see in clear outline the character, the methods, and the end of that thing, so hard to define and yet so real, which we call "the world."

Paul speaks of it as "this present evil world." I suppose he calls it "this present" world because, though we are here for a while, it is not our true home. Like Israel in Egypt, we believe that we are not here to stay. There is a land far away which God holds in reserve for us. It is called "evil" because he who limits his love and purpose to the present has narrowed the breadth of his manhood and has perverted the very thing he has. The present must be throbbing with the vision of the future, else it loses its significance and becomes evil.

First of all, let us note a few of the characteristic features of Egypt at the time of Israel's bondage, and see how they image the chief elements of the world. They are teeming industry, imposing art, intellectual culture, stimulating pleasure, magnificence of religion. When we have studied these somewhat in detail, let us notice the effect of all this on the

spiritual part—bondage. “They made Israel to serve with rigor.”

I. THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF EGYPT AS A TYPE OF THIS WORLD are:

1. *Teeming industry.* If we could travel back three thousand six hundred years and visit Egypt, as it was when Israel was there in bondage, we would probably be impressed first of all with the bustling activity of this oldest existing and most powerful civilization of the world. Sailing up the brown waters of the Nile, we would for the time forget its history, although it is as thrilling as romance itself, for the first thing to attract our eye would be its stirring commerce. Ships from the great sea are anchored there, some of them from far-off India, having come through the great canal which at that time corresponded almost exactly with the modern one. Boats from the cataracts there discharge their cargoes upon the low banks of the river. Everywhere we hear the shout of busy men, sailors, stevedores, merchants, passengers. On either side we see the emerald and yellow fields threaded with canals for purposes of irrigation, extending on to the seared rocks which mark the beginning of the desert. Egypt at the time of which we

speak was the garden of the world, and with an area but little larger than that of New Hampshire supported nearly two thousand towns and villages, and such immense cities as Heliopolis, Memphis, and Thebes; and it had a population of eight million souls.

It was not only the garden, it was the factory of the world. A tourist ascending the river would notice a thousand smoking chimneys, telling of many and immense industries in iron, brass, gold, linen, and glass. It was also the world's financial center. Around the banks and brokers' offices of Memphis the mighty wheel of universal commerce revolved.

We all know what that means, for centuries and geography make no differences in the essentials of human nature. The whirl of commerce is intense and absorbing. Its movement is like that of the maelstrom. On the outer circle is delightful sailing. The next exhilarates. Swirling on the next, we feel the pulse of intense life. The next hurls us beyond the power of return. The next is the plunge of death. I would not condemn commerce as such, but he is dull indeed who has not noticed how quickly it blunts the finer sensibilities and blinds the spirit's eye. There is no movement of the soul more diametrically opposite that of

the heavenly, and none more blinding and hopeless, than that of greed. Egypt in the splendor of her material luxury was reeling on the edge of an abysm of spiritual woe.

Another effect of this vast wealth of Egypt I am compelled to name. The tendency of wealth is accumulation. It has affinity for itself; it combines; it absorbs. The big fish swallow the little fish. That tendency, protected as it was for centuries by a strong and steady government, finally brought the entire wealth of the nation into the possession of a single race, the priestly and royal order. The government of Egypt owned all the land and all the industries. The people became practically, and in many instances actually, slaves of the Pharaohs. The Israelites were all slaves.

When one allows his spirit to come into bondage to his appetites it is an easy thing for him to surrender his nobler part, conscience, thought, and every divine thing, to him who can minister to those appetites. Formerly, when Israel loved right and God above material good, he could not be enslaved. They could bind him with cords and cast him in a dungeon; but even there he was a prince in spirit, and because of that he soon became a

prince in fact. But later, when Israel hungered for the fish, and melons, and leeks, and onions of Egypt, he was already a slave in spirit, and soon became so in fact.

From all this we learn that the world spirit is not the true soil for the growth of the divine life. There is a singular prophecy of Jesus, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," which has a larger significance than most men see. Put the emphasis on "*out of*" and you have it. The Christian cannot develop into the divine man when living in sympathetic contact with the world spirit. Hence "out of Egypt have I called him." It seems that the spiritual race was brought again and again into union with Egypt to emphasize the fact that its divinity cannot flourish there. When Israel went to that delightful country they settled down to stay, for "their lines had fallen to them in pleasant places." It was fatal. The sons of God became slaves. The divine nature is sure to come into disgraceful loss when it seeks rest in luxurious worldliness. Before that Abraham, called to be the father of the faithful, went down into Egypt and was worried till he returned to Canaan, the only field for the growth of the spiritual life.

2. A second feature of Egypt as a type of

this world is its *magnificence of art*. Egypt has been called "the mother of art," though it unquestionably got its artistic impulse and its models from the ancient Babylonia. Nevertheless, it is a fact that centuries before Greece began its brilliant history this old land was glorious with temples and statuary and paintings. Look at it as Moses saw it sixteen centuries before the birth of Christ.

There was the city of Heliopolis, the seat of the university of Egypt, where the great law-giver was educated and where, long after, Plato studied. There were long avenues guarded on either hand by colossal sphinxes. There were forests of obelisks glistening like crystallized sunbeams, which they were supposed to represent. There were doors of engraved brass and walls covered with sculpture in bas-relief, very like the later Etruscan and Grecian work. There were statues and pictures which, centuries later, greedy nations carried across the seas to adorn the palaces of Augustus in Rome and Constantine in the city of the Bosphorus. Some of their monoliths stand in the parks of Paris, London, and New York.

On the sacred river stood Memphis, already hoary with a thousand years. There were enormous works of art, among them one statue of

the great Rameses made of a single stone weighing nine thousand tons, which now lies prone on the sandy waste. Farther up the river is "hundred-gated Thebes," of which Homer sang and Herodotus wrote, the origin of which is lost in the mists of the far-off past, but which, like Athens in its palmy days, was one vast museum of art.

Across the river from Memphis are still standing those stupendous structures of which one has said, "Time mocks all things, but the pyramids mock Time." Amid them sits in awful grandeur that most solemn of all the monuments of history, the Sphinx, a lion's body nearly one hundred and fifty feet long, chiseled out of the living rock, and lifting its human head in grim majesty sixty-five feet above the plain. Its immense forepaws are stretched out in front fifty feet and embrace an inclosure where is erected a sanctuary.

Can I picture the august majesty of the temples which are built along the river? You pass between two towering statues, like those of Memnon which still stand elevated sixty feet above the river. You walk along broad paved walks, like that from Karnak to Luxor, four miles long. On either side sat the solemn sphinxes amid the crystalline obelisks. At

either end were monster temples with sloping walls and overhanging cornices covered with brilliantly colored intaglios, and the doors guarded with giant statues of the emperor god. From slender poles long streamers of crimson and yellow were flung to the winds. If we were permitted to enter the holy house, it would impress us as a dense cypress forest at sunset. Monster columns covered with brilliant hieroglyphs cast the blackest shadows across the vacant spaces. Man's presence sinks into insignificance. I need not describe the interior of the temple, but will only say that in respect to power and solemnity Egyptian art has never been surpassed. The effect of this feature of the great world on Israel was that it charmed the people of God into idolatry. How tame their simple patriarchal religion must have seemed to them in the brickyards of Goshen, with no temples, no priests, no altars, no images, no pageantry, only an invisible God and a holy life, and a hope long deferred! And all about them was this magnificence of an artistic religion. I do not suppose that the Israelites at first worshiped Egypt's gods; but, trying to image their own Hebrew ideas under the influence of Egyptian art, they fell into an idolatry of their own. In Josh. 24. 14 and in Ezek.

20. 8 we are distinctly told that they did finally go over to the foreign idolatry. We know how at the base of Sinai they actually made a golden calf and danced their idolatrous worship.

Brothers, it is hardly necessary for me to affirm that I am a friend of art. I would not lift my hammer against the creations of beauty. Indeed, the Christian spirit awakens the sense of the beautiful; and art never reached loftier heights in portraying the beautiful in architecture, poetry, painting, and music than when lifted on the wings of Christian inspiration. But art is not religion. And when we make religion an art it is idolatry. Æstheticism is not virtue. Indeed, it may be a lovely garb that clothes the rankest infamy. And the danger of spiritual Israel to-day in this splendid world is that its artistic charms may lead us into idolatry and licentiousness. Michael Angelo in his sonnet to Vasari says, "Form and color cannot give true peace to the mind; it seeks that Love which stretched out its arms to lift us up."

3. Another feature of Egypt as a type of this world was its *intellectual culture*. The story of the "wisdom of Egypt" is often told. We have already spoken of its school at Heliopolis.

We know that Plato went there to study philosophy four centuries before Christ. Herodotus, Thales, and Solon were there much earlier. For many years Egypt provided the leading minds of the world. It gave the world its ideas and disengaged its forces. In mechanical science, anatomy, medicine, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, music, and philosophy that land reached a position that excites the admiration and even the wonder of our times.

But as this knowledge was sacredly confined to the few, and with a single exception not communicated to Israelites, the effect of it on them was to strengthen their bonds. Mind is mightier than brawn. The learned few used their knowledge to practice false miracles and magic arts and play upon the imagination and fears of a superstitious people. By their devices the priests made the people slaves, and used them to gratify their lust for power and wealth. Even to-day knowledge, unless made the servant of the spiritual man, will soon become the taskmaster. There is many a man among us whose divinity is enslaved, and the cords that bind him are his knowledge. It is germane to our purpose to inquire how this world-wisdom affected Egypt. The wisest in the land seemed to know that

while knowledge was a divine gift it was fraught with peril, and only those who were prepared by a previous moral training could safely be intrusted with the sacred fire. Hence for many years it was kept an inviolate secret from all save those who were supposed to be qualified by a severe and protracted novitiate, the chief feature of which was the moral test.

And in this the Egyptians were certainly correct. Unless knowledge is built on a foundation of moral character, it is like a house built on the sand. Sooner or later "great will be the fall of it."

Another thing those Egyptians must have known—for they had before them the history of the buried Asiatic civilizations which recent excavations are disclosing to us—namely, that unless the human intellect is vitalized by moral character it soon reaches a limit beyond which it cannot go. That was so in Babylonia. It was so in Egypt, and later it was so in Greece and Rome. Among all these peoples and others besides, intellect was most vital when the nation was aspiring most deeply for the divine; and when its faith faltered its literature declined. It is often remarked that Homer, Plato, Cicero, and Seneca reached the highest level that the mind of man, of its own natural

vigor, can possibly attain. Beyond them the pagan world has never gone, and the reason is its want of vitalizing power. World-wisdom, understanding by that knowledge not saturated by moral character, suffers a limited development. Then when truth has lost its freshness the natural mind seeks to quicken it anew by the infusion of its own filth. In our day it is called realism; but it is the infection of fleshly lust doubly bestialized by its wanton publicity. The play of passion is mistaken for genius and the imperial intellect is debauched.

Happy would it have been for Egypt if it had laid this principle to heart. To lead the ages by furnishing the world with its ideas it must keep its mind clean. Otherwise its very knowledge will become stiff bands to choke out its life.

But out of Egypt's schools there came one, versed in all its wisdom, who had also the intuition of God. He was the man who furnished the thought which vitalized the dead world because it quivered in every fiber with "holiness to the Lord."

4. Another feature of the world life of Egypt was *stimulating pleasure*. It is commonly thought that life in Egypt was somber, centering in the mummy and circulating about the

sepulcher. But that is a mistake. Those who know that country best describe it as peculiarly gay, like Greece in its strength, or Rome when the entire world poured its treasures into its lap, or like Paris in the time of its luxuriance. Excepting in the neighborhood of the sanctuary and the tomb, the entire land was brilliant with music, banquet, dress, equipage, games. The land was reeling in the intoxication of pleasure. It is everywhere a characteristic symptom of a decaying heart.

I have used the qualifying word "stimulating" to characterize the pleasure which is of this world. To condemn pleasure as a thing unholy, or even as a thing not helpful to the higher life of the spirit, is to condemn that which nature, the Word of God, and the richest Christian experience approve. All nature tumultuously struggles for the best that is in it, and when it achieves it pours itself out in color or shout of joy. The rose pants to produce itself in fullness, then breathes out its happiness in color and fragrance. The bird in the fullness of its life warbles out its joyful song. The nature of the human heart is such that it demands pleasure. The attempt to suppress it is sure to result in one or both of two things: a powerful revolt from the unnatural bands and

a headlong plunge into the thing forbidden, as the river dammed only adds to the torrent's power, or there will be a deadly restraint of powers that ought to have free expression in order to the fullest manhood, just as monasticism, with its unnatural deprivations, degrades rather than exalts manhood. We are thus driven to the conclusion that pleasure is not only lawful, but that it is also mandatory. The unhappy man is not the truest man. Where that is the habitual condition we may be sure that something is awry.

In accord with the voice of nature is that of Scripture. While the Bible grapples with the dreadful problem of sin, and reaches down into the depths of a fallen world's woe, it bubbles over with joy. It is the gladdest book ever given to the world. The Old Testament is not a gloomy cult overshadowed by the thunderclouds of Sinai: its very law enjoins gladness (Deut. 28. 47, 48). As to the New Testament, it is the "gospel," which means "glad tidings."

It is not, then, a question whether we shall have pleasure or not, but what our pleasure shall be. If it be in the things of the spirit's true unfolding, then it is healthful and satisfying. But if it be an effort to fill the soul's great want by ministering to it through the ap-

petites, then two things will result. First, pleasure stimulates without feeding; it drives to excess for the reason that it does not satisfy. Then, secondly, all excess tends to death. It exhausts rather than builds up. It destroys the very power of enjoyment itself. No men are so miserable as the pleasure-seeker. It was so in Egypt. All that luxurious gayety failed to hide the grinning skeleton which it robed.

5. A fifth feature of world life is *magnificence of religion*. The world must have its religion: for the religious sense is instinctive and therefore universal. Atheism is as unnatural as love of death. If it exists at all, it is in very exceptional cases, and then only by an effort, and usually a desperate effort, of will. Even in these exceptional instances it totters like a spinning top when the originating impulse is about exhausted. The world can distort, but it cannot obliterate the God-factor which is an essential feature of human nature. When thus distorted it may become a degrading superstition, or a darkening metaphysical intellectualism, or a showy æstheticism with magnificent pageantry of worship and splendor of art and song. In Egypt all these things were in evidence; but more especially the third. If one

seeking to find expression for his deepest religious feeling could witness one of the temple functions of this historic land, he would undoubtedly give his testimony, "This is divine." Let him lie prostrate on the sacred pavement within the shadow of the temple walls, the solemn sphinxes looking over him into the immensities, the long procession of the white-robed priests chanting holy song, breathing into the hour the breath of the ages past, the skilled musicians thrumming their instruments, filling the air with quivering harmonies till the soul of the worshiper is elevated from out of the noise of this restless life into the profound hush of the immeasurable. No human argument could convince him that that was not of God.

Nor do we deny that, in some measure at least, his faith is correct. There is more than a modicum of truth in the old Greek aphorism that the beautiful is the true, and a genuine love of beauty is love of God. The æsthetic sense is closely akin to the spiritual. Hence poets, musicians, painters, architects who embody our deepest feelings, which otherwise would be vague and meaningless, and thus give them adequate outlet, are by universal assent called priests and prophets of God.

And this is more particularly true of those artists who have creative power, and can take us deeper into ourselves and make clear those spiritual mysteries which we have felt, but cannot interpret. Here lies the power as also the peril of the ritual which is a piece of art. That which was once a creative energy and a channel over which religious feeling might flow may, by the fact that it *is* art, become the force to suppress the very thing which it is supposed to create.

The old artists who could appreciate the creative spirit of Raphael thought to perpetuate that spirit by reducing the principles involved in the paintings of his school, to certain fixed rules. But in doing so they suppressed that spontaneous freedom of action which aspiration for the ideal demands, and thus crushed out possible new creations by forcing genius into certain fixed formulæ. To fossilize the ideal is to destroy its life. The modern Pre-Raphaelite school is an earnest protest against the death of living art by mechanical rules, however correct they may be. This illustrates the danger of an artistic worship to genuine religious life. It is easily made a substitute for the living thing. The performance of a reverent act may pass for reverence itself.

Even when used in all sincerity the feelings occasioned by the splendid service may be only the gratification of an æsthetic taste, and not a real appreciation of the great divine verities that give the service its true value; such as the holiness of God, the richness of his saving grace in Christ Jesus, the beauty of character which is ours in him. Worship then, instead of being the key to unlock the realm of the spiritual universe, becomes a dead routine. It loses freshness, healthfulness, and finally vitality itself. We have seen this principle frequently illustrated in the Christian Church, where the most thoroughly worldly spirits have stilled the demands of conscience by a punctilious observance of an artistic religious service, in which æsthetic feeling passes for love of God and loyalty to goodness. But, as in Egypt of old, it is none the less all of this world.

II. THE EFFECT OF THE WORLD LIFE ON THE SPIRITUAL MAN. ISRAEL WAS BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE.

This is the way in which it is described in the book of Exodus: "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner

of service in the field : all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor, . . . and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.”

These pastoral people were driven from the pasture fields into the clay pits to make brick, an employment regarded as of the most servile kind. The monuments show that foreigners were employed in these mean works under native overseers. We can imagine the cruelty of the bastinado which so roused Moses to strike down him who abused the Hebrew slave. Those of their number who did not work in the brick pits were compelled to cultivate the uplands of Goshen, where agriculture demanded the most laborious toil because of the necessity of watering by artificial methods, the use of wheel and earthen pots. Dean Stanley thinks that we have a perfect picture of the condition of the Jews during their bondage, in the peasants who are seen along the Nile to-day, naked under the burning sun, working through the day like pieces of machinery in drawing up buckets of water from the level of the river for the irrigation of the fields above. He describes the gangs of boys and girls carrying the earthen jars of water, and as they pass

each other in mournful procession, chanting the strophe and antistrophe in melancholy chorus: "They starve us, they starve us"—"They beat us, they beat us"; to which both alike reply, "But there is some one above, there is some one above, who will punish them well, who will punish them well."

Now, all this seems like a story of three thousand six hundred years ago. But how accurately we have described the leading features of the great world about us to-day!—with its busy commerce and its passion for wealth; with its elegance of art, by which it charms the natural heart; with its massive learning and deification of reason, by which it extinguishes the heavenly light of the spirit; with its brilliant pleasures, by which it disguises its misery; with its æsthetic worship, by which it lulls the conscience and robes its vice. Names have changed, but the essentials of the Egyptian world are the potent forces of the world of to-day.

The other side of the picture is also true. For the spiritual man who is content to live where "the lines are in pleasant places," it is sure BONDAGE.

II

THE PROMISED LAND

Deut. 11. 10-15: "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. And it shall come to pass, if ye shall harken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full."

ISRAEL figures in history as the holy people, through whom God has given to the world redemption. So Palestine figures in history as the Holy Land, in which God has wrought redemption for the world. The land itself was predestined, foreordained, promised, blessed, cursed, as truly as its people. There is no land on the earth whose geographical features are

so wrought into the salvation of the world as it. Its mountains and valleys, its rivers and lakes, its groves and wells are so interwoven with the divine life as to have become sacred. The mere utterance of the names fills our hearts with holy emotions: Hermon, Olivet, Zion, Calvary; Jabboc, Kishon, Cedron, Jordan; the waters of Merom, the Lake of Galilee, the Dead Sea, the Well of Sychar; Hebron, Genesareth, Nazareth, Jerusalem. What memories! What hopes!

The exiled Jew used to turn his face toward Jerusalem and throw his spirit across the separating distances and pray. Millions of us have imbibed his spirit and our thoughts turn with joy and hopefulness to that Holy Land. It is our land, the land of our fathers—the land of our spiritual ancestry.

Out of the thousands of things that have been written and spoken of Palestine I wish to gather up and name a few, in order to enforce this one fact—the Holy Land was planned out in the eternal counsels of Jehovah to be an important and necessary factor in redemption.

I. NOTICE ITS PLACE IN RELATION TO THE OTHER NATIONS.

1. *It is geographically the very center of the ancient world.* Take a map of Bible lands, and then with a rule draw straight lines directly across from the most distant points on the border, and the focal point will be close to the chosen land. If we would change those lines a little, as we would be compelled to do in actual travel, they would actually center in Palestine. It is literally true, as God declared through his prophet, "This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations" (Ezek. 5. 5). Name the nations of Bible times—Phenicia, Syria, Chaldea, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Rome, Greece, and Asia Minor—and you have circulated about Palestine. For many centuries the learned Jews and Christian scholars said that Jerusalem was the exact center of the earth; and under the dome of the Greek Church in Jerusalem a circle is marked in the pavement and a column set up, which is the traditional spot.

Aside from all the follies that have gathered about this tradition, it is, nevertheless, a fact that if God had chosen a spot on which to erect a lighthouse which could throw its light into the greatest number of the nations of the earth, the Holy Land would have been the place. If it was with the

natural eye that the devil would show Jesus "all the nations of the earth," he could have chosen no better place than a "high mountain apart" in Palestine. It is a marvelous fact, as Kitto so well observes, that during the whole period of Jewish history, light, intellectual, moral, and religious, radiated from this land and from this alone. The farther one receded from it, the more dim the light became; and the nearer one approached, it shone with the greater radiance. Palestine was the birth-place of intellectual life, civil and religious liberty.

2. *While Palestine was the most central of all the nations, it was at the same time the most isolated country of Bible times.* Some one has called it "the garden of the Lord," another, an oasis, so completely is it cut off from the rest of the world by mountains, desert, and sea. It is separated from the nations of the East by vast hot plains of gravel, three hundred miles across. Deserts on the south cut it off from Egypt. On the west the waters of the great sea "roll as large with mystery as did the Atlantic to Europe before the days of Columbus." On the north are the towering mountains of Lebanon, which Stanley describes as "the natural fortifications of that vineyard which

was hedged round about with tower and hedge, sea and desert."

There is large meaning in this fact of Palestine's separation from the rest of the world. God selected it as he would a school in which to train his people in holiness. It is an old Bible maxim that "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Even now when a good man becomes intimate with the world he has broken down that barrier which is the line of safety; and the prodigal takes his first step from his father's house. When in close connection with the other nations the people imitate their maxims, immorality, and idolatry. Hence God put as a law for his people—exclusion: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." They were not to mix with other people in any way, either in marriage or religious fellowship, or even in commercial partnership. The principle is stated in Deut. 7. 1-6:

When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no

covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Palestine's isolation was most favorable for this exclusion. Hence it was the chosen land of God and promised long before Israel became a people. If that country was not specially made for that purpose, it certainly serves it most effectively.

3. Another fact in this connection, which is either a wonderful providence or a most fortunate chance, is this: *when, after a long exclusion, Israel had become enriched with divine revelation and a lofty creed, the national boundaries broke completely down.* Highways of traffic were laid across the land and the people could no longer be hidden. When out of Judaism the gospel came, the messengers of the cross could have found no more favorable spot for the scattering of the light than the prom-

ised land. And the great events that broke up the Jewish nation about that time aided the spread of the gospel. It is indeed a fact that has been often remarked, that at that transition period the position of Palestine appeared as if specially designed to favor and consummate the divine plan by the ready access it afforded to the messengers of truth to every kingdom of the known world.

II. Another thing has attracted the attention of the students of the providential history of the promised land, namely ITS PHYSICAL FEATURES. I cannot mention half the pertinent things that have been named, but will note a few, enough, I trust, to impress the marvelous physical adaptations of the land for its sublime redemption purposes.

1. In studying the physical features of this land notice that fact of which Geikie makes so much, *the smallness of its territory*. That little country is out of all proportion to the magnitude of the place it fills in history. From Dan to Beersheba the distance is only one hundred and thirty-nine miles. Measuring only twenty miles from shore to shore on the north, it gradually widens till its breadth is only forty miles at the south, which is its

widest point. It contains less territory by twelve hundred square miles than the State of Massachusetts.

There is a providence in that fact. Vast territory is not favorable to concentration and intensification of national genius. When there is no room for expansion without, the nation is apt to expand from within. Little Greece, in the embrace of the sea, with natural hindrances to the acquisition of territory, blossomed in the beautiful flowers of art, literature, and philosophy. Rome was never so great as when the city of the Tiber preserved its individuality. In the degree in which she amalgamated with the conquered lands she grew weaker, until at last the image broke by the weight of its added parts. What seemed to be England's poverty—namely, her narrow island territory—was really the secret of her strength. In her narrow bounds she developed an idea, and now holds two continents and lands which belt the world. When you wish your plant to come to a speedy bloom you plant it in a little pot, where there is small room for it to spend its energies in the root. Then it throws its strength upward and breaks out in flower.

The boasted breadth of our times, which appropriates the good of all nations and castes

and religions, whatever may be said in its favor, certainly is not favorable to the development of individual genius. The man who believes everything generally believes nothing. The Jack-at-all-trades is good at none. Originality and commanding personality are easily lost in the breadth of culture so called.

The original geniuses of our era, as of all others, have generally gone voluntarily where God forced Israel—into seclusion. It is no meaningless fact that the pot in which God put his choice plant was so small. Having endowed Israel with the genius of holiness, and having environed him with the law, he put his elect in a land which was predestined by its advantageous position, without foreign aid or distraction, to lift its inhabitants speedily to the bloom of its own flower. The littleness of the Holy Land favored the concentration of its people upon the one fact of its mission. The roots were crowded and the plant hurried on to the flower.

Furthermore, as Israel came more and more into the knowledge and faith of the God of holiness the smallness of the territory compelled the people to emigrate, and so become missionaries of the truth. Holding tenaciously to their national faith, they scattered over the

earth, and so unconsciously, yet effectively, were preparing the world for the knowledge of the truth when at last it should be proclaimed in its fullness. They gave speedily grown specimens of the flower, which was afterward to be grown more slowly, but on a larger scale, by the entire human race.

2. Notice also *the variety of the physical features of that little land*. I cannot do better than just quote statements of travelers and close observers of the country. Dr. Strong says: "Probably there is no country in the world of the same extent which embraces a greater variety in temperature than Palestine. On Mount Hermon, at its northern border, we approach a region of perpetual snow. From this we descend successively by the peaks of Bashan and upper Galilee and Samaria, where the vine and fig tree are at home, to the plains of the seaboard, where the palm and banana produce their fruit, down to the sultry shores of the Dead Sea, on which we find tropical heat and tropical vegetation." Isaac Taylor says: "Palestine in the age of its wealth was a sampler of the world; it was a museum counting many lands in one; the tread of a camel in two or three hours may now give the traveler a recollection of his own home, come

whence he may from any country between the torrid zone and our northern latitudes. Every spring its hillsides are gay with the embroidery of flowers—the resplendent crocus, the scented hyacinth, the anemone, the narcissus, the daffodil, the florid poppy, the ranunculus, the tulip, the lily, and the rose. These jewels of the spring morning, these children of the dew, bedded in divans of sweet thyme, invite millions of bees, and the most showy of insect orders. Flowers, perfumes, butterflies, birds of song—all things humble and beautiful flourish and are safe.” Geikie says: “Perhaps the most striking peculiarity of Palestine as the spot chosen by God for his revelations of religious truth to our race, and for the incarnation of the Saviour of mankind, is that it presents within its narrow bounds the characteristics of climate and productions scattered elsewhere over all the habitable zones—from the snowy north to the tropics. . . . Within the extent of a single landscape there is every climate, from the cold of northern Europe to the heat of India.”

You can readily see the force of all this. Climate is a powerful factor in the making of character. So is our geographical environment. The hardy virtues of the mountains are

not so readily developed in the warmth of the tropics. But, on the other hand, they check the growth of that poetic genius which is the pride of the sunny clime. The manhood of the desert flats is quite unlike that of the rolling farmlands. The ideal man, the man of all the world, must have these creative streams conjoin in one. If we were to seek a field in which the influence of all climates and soils should combine to make a cosmopolitan man, we could find no place which more fully met the conditions than the home that God selected for Israel. Its geographical position and its physical structure seem to combine to raise a nation easily and speedily above the first difficulties of its existence to the loftiest stage of intellectual life and varied culture.

Long before Israel possessed it the land exerted its beneficent influence on its inhabitants. In the very dawn of history Palestine stands up clear out of the mists of earliest memories as a civilized land. When Abraham first entered the land he found the Canaanites already there dwelling as people of advanced civilization in cities and villages. Even Homer sings of the Sidonians, as a people of high culture which the Greeks could rather admire at a distance than emulate.

Do you ask, then, how those Canaanites came to be so corrupt? The reply is easy. It was their very culture, which, unless fortified by severe moral life, is sure to cast the civilized man down into depths of corruption proportionate with the height of his attainment. There is appalling peril in overculture, because, as has been frequently remarked, "the arts of refinement themselves become instruments of vice." With a true spiritual life a man can climb the heights without growing dizzy. There is absolutely no limit to his advance. Without that, there is a line which he cannot pass. He is dazed; he reels; he steps over the cliff and is broken at the depth of the abyss. Canaan is not the only land that has that fact written in her soil. And that suggests another fact which ought to be named.

3. *Lest the variety and generosity of this favored land should overdo its benefactions, and so convert a blessing into a curse, he who "cared for" this land, placed in it powerful antidotes to a growing effeminacy.* Ewald enumerates several of these features which I cannot take the time to elaborate: destructive earthquakes, to which it has at all times been exposed; frequent and ruinous inundations; the unchecked rage of desolating storms and

dreadful hot winds from the Arabian desert; a temperature liable to violent shocks and dangerous changes; the plague of locusts, and ravages occasioned by the dreadful increase of scorpions and similar creatures; numerous diseases, some slow and horrible like leprosy; and, lastly, the extreme instability of property and life in consequence of the incessant incursions of enemies. These distresses in the providence of God are really made benefactions in that they prevented an unchecked relapse into luxurious indolence and a forgetfulness of God.

Taking these several features of the land into consideration, its littleness, its variety, and its antidote to effeminacy, its physical structure does seem to have been determined by the Infinite One for the very purpose of producing the perfect man. So far as country can contribute to the making of a man great and good, Palestine was all that could be required. Well might the Lord say, "What more could I have done for my vineyard than I have done?"

III. In closing I must state one more fact concerning this singular land, a fact that figures greatly in its providential history. THIS GARDEN SPOT OF MARVELOUS BEAUTY AND

PRODUCTIVENESS, CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, IS NOW ONE OF THE MOST BARREN, DESOLATE, POVERTY-STRICKEN LANDS ON THIS GLOBE.

That part of it about the Sea of Galilee, which Josephus describes as almost an earthly paradise (a portion of which was called because of its natural treasures Genesareth, which means "Garden of riches"), on whose shores were the flourishing cities of Capernaum, Magdala, Tiberias, Bethsaida, and others, whose hillsides were covered with terraces of vineyards—that land remarkable for its beauty and health is now almost entirely deserted. Dr. Thompson, that careful observer in the Lord's land, thus describes Genesareth: "The mournful and solitary silence reigns alike over sea and shore. The cities are in ruins, and in every direction the country is waste and desolate. The inhabitants are nearly all gone. The few that remain in the shattered houses of Tiberias, the few mud huts of Magdala and the black tents of the wandering Bedouin, seem worn and wasted by poverty and sickness."

As to the rest of that sacred land, war, ruin, and neglect, like hungry dogs, have devoured it. The cultivated mountain terraces have

been washed down into the valleys, leaving rocky walls almost bare of verdure. The valleys have been cropped for ages, with hardly any attempt at fertilization. Its trees have been cut down and never replaced. Its fields have been desolated, its structures pillaged, and all its improvements ruthlessly destroyed. The detestable Turk holds it and robs it of the last vestiges of thrift.

This is the story of Palestine to-day as reported by those who have made reverent pilgrimages to this "Home of Religion." How shall we account for this change? The curse of God is on the earth because of the apostasy of his people. It is just as it was predicted (Lev. 26. 27-35) long before the elect people took the land:

And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then . . . I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

III

THE CALL OF A DELIVERER

Exod. 3. 10: "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

Two hundred and ten years had passed since Jacob went with his family down into Egypt, and found "the lines laid in pleasant places." Little did he think that generations would come and go before his people would have any real desire to possess the land which God had covenanted with their fathers to give them. But at last the hour had struck—"Come *now*."

Why now, rather than two centuries earlier? We have the answer in the previous verse: "Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me." It was not till now that they could be persuaded to leave Egypt. The pleasantness of their situation in the pasture uplands of Goshen and their fondness for the sensual manners of Egypt had prevented any great longing for Canaan. They may have boasted that Canaan was their inheritance, but they had no desire to go, at least no desire of

sufficient strength to brave the appalling dangers of a conquest. They loved Egypt too well. Even after their oppression they could hardly be restrained from returning to its flesh pots. How vain would it have been to tempt them away when they were happy in their shepherd freedom! It took the bondage, the brick kiln, the water wheel, the lash of the bastinado to break their love for Egypt and awaken a desire for the land of promise.

It is a truth common to all times that the kingdom of God must be entered through tribulation. We are so fond of our Egypt—this great, luxurious world, with its wealth and art and wisdom and pleasure and pompous religion. Its delights prevent the rise of any strong desire for the spiritual inheritance. What cared the prodigal for his father's house when he was drinking the pleasures of the far country? It took the degradation of the swineherd and the hunger pinches to bring him to himself. Out of sorrow he cried, "I have sinned." There is profound significance in the fact that the gospel invitation is to the burdened, the weary, the sin-laden. The happy ones will not heed.

If we ask why did not God force his people to the land he had prepared for them, and so

avoid this long delay of centuries, our reply is that by doing so he would destroy the very purpose of his covenant with them. His aim was to unfold in them the idea and the fact of holiness, and so elevate them into the same sphere in which he himself moved. He can make the land by the word of his power, for there is nothing to resist his omnipotent will. But when he comes to deal with his people he encounters a moral factor—the element of free will—and must change his mode of action from compulsion to persuasion, in which always there is the possibility of failure. Destroy freedom and you obliterate all moral distinctions. The man who imprints the kiss of betrayal is as innocent as the one who receives it, for he is himself the victim of a resistless law. The human conscience will never accept this degrading conclusion, which denies moral responsibility. Nor does God in dealing with his creatures ever violate it. It remains in us a mark of our exalted character, an endowment perilous with the possibilities of woe, and at the same time the crown of our divinity.

So in dealing with the people whom he had chosen to be the medium of his revelation he did not compel them, but patiently waited their will. One would have supposed that with the

glorious hope disclosed in the covenant before them these people would have given themselves with eagerness to achieving it at once. But far from it; this "stiff-necked generation" was content with present comforts; and while these comforts lasted they had no earnest wish for "a better country." Hence the reason of the delay was with them and not with God. He never forgot his covenant with Abraham. Patiently he waited till his people came into the dire consequences of their indifference to spiritual things and out of great woe cried unto him.

While Israel was delaying God was preparing for their deliverance. Let us study:

I. THE PROVIDENTIAL PREPARATION OF MOSES TO DELIVER ISRAEL. II. THE PERSONAL DECISION OF MOSES.

I. THE MOMENT THAT ISRAEL WAS READY FOR LIBERTY THE MAN APPEARED WHO BY YEARS OF PREVIOUS TRAINING WAS FITTED TO BE THEIR EMANCIPATOR.

It is not an uncommon occurrence. Almost every page of history illustrates the fact that every great event brings to the front the man especially qualified to meet the emergency. We hastily say the occasion makes the man.

But that cannot be, for the man must be ready when the occasion is ripe. All unconscious to himself he is preparing, when lo! the man and the occasion meet. On the chess board of history men and events move so correctly in order to win the game for God that I cannot but believe that God plays the game. Pharaoh makes a move in enslaving Israel by which he expects to win. God answers it with—MOSES—and the game is his. Moses was eighty years in preparation in which four things in particular appear, which are necessary to secure the result:

1. *He was a Hebrew, having the natural endowments and the strong affinities of a Hebrew.* It was just as it was in the greater redemption in "the fullness of time." The Redeemer arose from the people to be redeemed. Christ was one of us, our Brother.

2. *He was privileged with all the benefits of an Egyptian of the higher class.* He knew its wisdom, its science, its politics, its military tactics, and withal was possessed of an influence in the court of Pharaoh. He was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter.

How he could be all this and retain his Hebrew sympathies is explained by the fact that his early years, by the providence of God, were

spent with his Hebrew mother. She doubtless taught him his origin and told him the stories of his forefathers. Jochebed was a brave woman, for she dared to violate the law of the realm; she was a woman of convictions, for "by faith" she placed the babe in the Nile. This was the woman who developed that boy's nature, those great Hebrew qualities of character that were latent in the child. That properly is education, the unfolding of nature. The Egyptian scholars gave him instruction. He owed his politics, his generalship, his science to the foreigners. His Hebrew character he owed to his slave mother. Slave though she was, and living in the wretched poverty of the brickmakers, she was a princess at heart. And it was probably her very affliction that made her such. It was that that kindled the slumbering embers of patriotism and fired the passion of her love, and exalted her conception of the Hebrew tradition, till it throbbed in her soul a vital truth. It is friction that collects the electric forces which flash out in burning streams of power. And it is this electric force of character, evoked by trouble, that gives motive and direction to the life forces of a child more than all the scientific instructions given by professional teachers. The mother heart,

if true, always was and ever will be more potent than scholarship in fixing the destiny of our children.

3. *A spiritual vision and strength of character to work it out in actual life.* These two things are essential to leadership, a dream and a corresponding activity. There is a something that belongs to every great man which is almost impossible to name. It is not scholarship; there is many a scholar who is only a pigmy of a man. It is not eloquence, nor self-assertion, nor passion. These are gifts; but they may exist without greatness of spirit. It is not goodness, for many a good man is only a zero among men. It is the spirit of a man possessed of that which is vastly greater than itself. The man who has no outlook larger than his own little self is just the reverse of what I would suggest. The self-centered man is really a little man, spinning on his own axis but having no orbit. Would you be your best? Break away from self. Find some great light and make your orbit about it.

There is nothing better calculated to develop this largeness of character than solitude. The great men in every sphere of life come out of lonely places; such were Elijah, John the Baptist, Paul, Bernard of Clairvaux, Luther,

Jesus. In such places they saw, and there they purposed. Out of the silences they came, and new names were written on the scroll of the immortals.

There was a providence in those forty years which Moses spent in that solemn sanctuary "back of the wilderness." There, away from the entanglements of artificial life, he communed with the Unseen. Under the starry vault, amid the mighty crags, he exercised his disciplined mind. He thought upon Hebrew history and destiny till he was himself possessed of Israel's hope. Breathed into him by the breath of the Eternal, it came to him, as in later years the hope of the Gentiles came to Paul, the one absorbing passion of his soul, before which all things else sank into insignificance. Another thing, however, was needed before he could set himself to achieving this hope.

4. *A special divine call.* This came to him thus: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." What did that burning acacia mean to Moses at the time? And what did it mean to him as he studied it in later years from out

of the vision of a larger experience? In maturer years the experiences of earlier days have a significance which at the time of their occurrence did not appear. The larger thought, so gloriously true, which the Christian Church has of the burning thorn bush could hardly have occurred to Moses, when he "turned aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned."

We can easily imagine this great soul tending the flocks of Jethro and living in hourly communion with the God of his fathers in the deep solitudes of nature's symbolisms, his whole being glowing with the truth of the ancient covenant. He knew the sacred names by which God was known by his fathers: EL, the mighty one, the first and beginning of all; ELOHIM, the adorable one, the manifold cause of all things; JEHOVAH-ELOHIM, the ever-existing first cause of all being; EL-SHADDAY, God, Almighty; JEHOVAH-JIREH, the Lord will provide. These are the names by which God was known up to this time among his people—great and glorious; but, alas! his people were in the fires of affliction. It really looked as though they were to be consumed and all their early history become only a sweet dream. Was this to be the end

of the covenant? This much at least must have come to the heart of the great man when he lay prone, unsandaled, before the flaming acacia and heard the voice of the angel of the Lord, who in the days of long ago had addressed his fathers. Israel is not consumed because the covenanting God is in the flame.

While this is the first and natural suggestion of the burning bush, it is evident that its meaning enlarged in the wider experiences of after years. Moses, in Deut. 33. 16, speaks of the "good will of him that dwelt in the bush." That flame came to be to him identical with the glory flame-cloud which led the hosts of God through the wilderness, and which finally settled over the mercy seat in the ark of the covenant between the cherubim in the Holy of holies in the tabernacle—the flame-robed God.

But what of the bush? We think with most of our interpreters of the Old Testament symbolism that it is the emblem of that in which God was dwelling, first in Israel, the true Church of God; then in the Word made flesh, "in whose humanity alone, Deity could dwell without consuming it." It was the type of our Redeemer, the angel of the covenant, who now speaks to us all.

II. THE DECISION OF MOSES.

Moses then, so far as birth, education, and providential environment could prepare him, was fitted for his work. But one thing yet remained—his own will. That is free. No man becomes a servant of God by compulsion. So we find this great man next in a heart struggle with duty. The details of that struggle are so true to nature and so practical that we will consider them one by one.

1. *The first reply of Moses to the divine call is, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"* Instead of a quick response, "Here am I," there is a deep sense of his own personal unworthiness, and he pleads "Who am I?" A smaller than he might have felt his competence. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." But our hero knew the magnitude of his task, the power of Pharaoh's court, the abject condition of Israel, the extreme difficulty of conducting two million men over a desert, even under the most favorable circumstances. The work of the emancipation of Israel was no child's play. Viewing it with the eye of a general and a statesman, he shrank from the undertaking as from the impossible.

But I cannot think that that alone explains his shrinking. This was a plain call of God. Duty must be done. Does it seem impossible? "Faith laughs at impossibilities." When God's people shrink from obedience of unmistakable duty it usually indicates some moral defect, perhaps some personal sin lurking in the memory, or possibly half forgotten. And the memory of that unfaithfulness becomes painfully intense when conscience is roused by the voice of God; and then it unfits for the larger task. Was that true of Moses?

Certain it is that with all his goodness he had neglected a duty at home. Through the unbelief of his wife in the bloody rite of circumcision he had failed to imprint this divine seal of the covenant on his own son. Here is a passage which relates an experience of his which occurred after he had given his consent to God's call, which helps us to understand his hesitancy at this time: "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision" (Exod. 4. 24-26). That

“God sought to kill him” is probably a strong statement of the fact that Moses fell sick and lay at the point of death. Then he was reminded of his failure in his own home, and that disqualified him for his larger duty toward Israel.

The Abrahamic significance of the rite of circumcision was twofold: it was the seal of the covenant made with God (Acts 7. 8) and it was a token to Israel of the promised Messiah (Gen. 17). Thus the bloody rite was, in meaning at least, akin to the bleeding sacrifices, which, like that of Abel, foreshadowed Him who shed his blood for us. Zipporah evidently had no sympathy with this faith, and expressed her contempt when, having consented to the act, she flung her insult in the face of her husband, who was sick unto death.

How it happened that Moses yielded so vital a matter as this to the persuasions of his wife is difficult for us to understand. But we know how often it occurs that men who live in contemplation of the immensities and eternities have little patience with the common details of practical life, and are willing to leave them to the will of those who live in that lower sphere. Furthermore, we know that it is a common

thing for unusual magnitude of character to be conjoined with some great weakness. In Moses that weakness went by the name of "meekness" and was reckoned his virtue. But his humility seemed to be a painful distrust of self, which in the last analysis was distrust of God. When it refused to put forth an act in obedience it was unfaith. When it acted in disobedience it was still unfaith, and spent itself in violent, unreasoning passion. It was no virtue at all, but an irritating and weakening self-consciousness. He may have called the yielding to the wish of his wife the gentleness of love, but so far from its strengthening their bonds it finally snapped them asunder. Zipporah snarled out, "A bloody espousal is ours," and returned to her father.

Another thing caused Moses to hesitate in this sublime hour of his call. He probably remembered his former failure. Forty years before he felt himself to be Israel's champion, and when he saw the Egyptian abusing one of his fellow countrymen, he drew his sword and slew him. That effort ended in his exile. In that instance he acted without direction from God, and acted by his own impulse. The failure of our own foolish attempts at usefulness makes us timid and shears us of our

strength when the call comes unmistakably from God himself.

But God sweeps all objections of Moses aside with "I will be with thee." That is enough. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The one cheering assurance which Jesus gave his little band when he sent them out to recover the entire world from its bondage was, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

2. *But Moses still hesitates.* "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers has sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" That was a wise caution. It is always well for us to make sure of our authority and our message. The Lord promptly answered his servant: "I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

None of the many names by which God has revealed himself to his people has so profoundly stirred the human heart, and, excepting the name of Jesus—if, indeed, that may properly be called an exception—none has so powerfully affected human history as this EHJEH, I AM. Scholarly men and reverent

men in trying to fathom its meaning have found themselves lost in unsearchable abysses. Following their leadings, our hearts have quivered with vast conceptions of a self-existing One, uncaused, before all and in all, comprehending all from first to last; all being apart from him is nothingness, and only participates in existence so far as he deigns to bestow upon it that participation, outlasting all, unchanged and unchangeable through all eternity. Unquestionably all that and more is wrapped up in this august I AM.

But the one great fact which it brought to Moses at the time, and which came with saving power to the minds of the poor afflicted slaves, was this: it meant that Jehovah was not simply the Infinite Being resting quietly in his own perfections aloof from men, but was that Infinite One living in constant activity for them, continually projecting his will into their history in saving mercy, ready always to make himself known in actual fulfilling of all he had covenanted with his fathers. And so this I AM became a name of moral power, fitted to stir the hearts of the Hebrew people and enable them to meet every emergency. Whatever occurs, I AM is there. Every need is met by this adorable name. Common things by that name

become a terror to those against whom they are cast, while he who uses them suffers no harm. The rod becomes a serpent, the hand becomes leprous. "Cast thy rod; stretch out thy hand." The power of I AM is there. Thus was the message attested for Moses.

Brothers, has all this no meaning for us? Is not this I AM identical with our JESUS? Is not he the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end? Is not he ever present and ever operating in our behalf for the perfection of the covenant of grace for us?

Macintosh with clear spiritual insight remarks concerning the mysterious name: "Jehovah in taking this title was furnishing his people a blank check to be filled up to any amount. He calls himself I AM, and faith has but to write over against that ineffably precious name, whatever we want. God is the only significant figure, and human need may add the ciphers."

Let us believe in the immeasurable power of our I AM, Jesus our Redeemer, and fill up the checks he has given us. But he has anticipated our wants and written them all in, over his own name. Are we in darkness? "I AM light." Are we hungry? "I AM bread." Are

we perishing? "I AM life." "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

3. *Moses interposed a third difficulty.* "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice." Any faithful minister who has found that the chief hindrance he encounters to the work of God in the world is the preoccupation and utter indifference of his own people can fully appreciate this objection. He does not fear the enemies of God; but can he withstand the want of faith and purpose of God's own children?

God answers this objection of Moses by two signs which have a common meaning and are readily understood—the shepherd's crook became a serpent and the hand became leprous. We need not be appalled by these miracles; for they only symbolize a far greater miracle which is daily wrought before our very eyes. The common things of our life are feeble enough when faith is weak and obedience is hesitating, but they become a portentous power when the decisive act is performed. And yet how slow we are!—waiting for God to act on us in miracle, whereas the true miracle occurs when we act in God. The Jews now tell astonishing stories about that wonder-

working rod, utterly perverting its meaning. They say that it was cut by Adam before leaving paradise, was brought by Noah into the ark, passed into Egypt with Joseph, and was recovered by Moses when he enjoyed the favor of the court. But it has been well said that these legends arose from downright inability to receive the true lesson of the incident, which is the confronting the scepter of Egypt with the simple staff of the shepherd, the choosing of the weak things of the earth to confound the strong, the power of God to work his miracles by the most puny and inadequate means.

4. *And now after every objection had been met and every real difficulty removed, and the way seemed clear for him to go, Moses still hesitates. "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, . . . but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."*

That was the weakest point in all the hesitancy of Moses. It was degrading the whole argument to a personal matter. Eloquence! As though fine words rather than truth were to convince. It proved a lamentable want of faith. Had not God said, "I will be with thee." Had Moses forgotten so soon the "I AM"? Why did he not write over against that name "mouth"? It really looks like a childish effort

to dodge the truth of the call. And all under the plea of a virtue, the virtue of humility.

That final effort to shirk cost Moses much. God was angry with him. Henceforth he had to speak through another. In all his after work he was embarrassed by his spokesman, the eloquent, thoughtless, vacillating, weak-willed Aaron. He who could have done so much better alone is now doomed to do not so well through another. A golden opportunity was lost forever. "Then," said Jeremiah, "I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." The divine potter meant to make a better vessel of Moses than was made. The fault in the clay that marred it and made it unfit for the finer vessel was this miserable self-consciousness of the great man, which he would not lay a sacrifice on the altar of duty.

Let us take this lesson to heart. God has a first choice for each one of us. If we are prompt to obey, he will fashion us into the goodly vessel. If we fault, then, alas! a second place is ours. Thus Peter, whom God called to be the apostle to the Gentiles, allowed his

own and the prejudice of his brethren to mar the clay which the Heavenly Potter was turning on the wheel. He lost his opportunity. Another was called to fill the high place which he himself had lost.

When God unmistakably calls, the wise thing and the only safe thing for us to do is to respond, as did Paul, "What wilt thou have me to do?" When the answer comes let there be no hesitancy. Happy for us if at the last we can say, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

IV

MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH

Exod. 5. 1: "And afterward Moses . . . went in and told Pharaoh, . . . Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."

PHARAOH represents the god of this world. While there were many deities in the Egyptian faith, the king was the one in fact. His will was supreme. He carried the very name of the great god: "Pharaoh" means "Sun." His image sits in colossal at the temple gates and his deeds are recorded on its walls. The people render him divine honors. We recognize the spirit of the fallen archangel in his proud defiance of Moses: "Who is Jehovah, . . . that I should let Israel go?" No soul that has ever awakened to the bitter consciousness of its bondage to Satan, and has cried, "Let me go that I may worship my God," but has felt the power of this world's opposing spirit, "I will not let Israel go." But unless we do go we cannot know the joy of a feast with God. We must first break the bonds of sin; then comes the feast.

Here, then, we have a picture of a spiritual struggle, the struggle of a soul longing for deliverance with the power that has held it in bondage. Let us study the picture. It will help us to a better understanding of our own inner life.

I. THE DELIVERANCE WAS WROUGHT BY A SERIES OF MIRACLES.

Salvation is of God. "The outstretched arm" was Omnipotence. The psalmist (Psa. 105. 26-36) summarizes these wonders:

He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen. They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He smote also all the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength.

I cannot speak of these miracles in detail, but wish to state a few things concerning them. They were not wrought solely for the purpose

of redeeming Israel. If that were the only purpose, He who could poison the Nile and slay the firstborn of all Egypt in a single night could by the breath of his power have swept that historic land from off the face of the earth and made for Israel an uninterrupted passage to Canaan. In addition to that object, therē were three others brought out in the narrative which so exalt the divine wisdom in the choice of these misunderstood miracles that I will rapidly name them.

1. *They were designed to confound the powers of Egyptian idolatry with which the kingdom of Satan was at the time identified.* These miracles in a very striking way expose the impotence of the very things which Egypt adored as divine. For example, to Egypt the Nile was life. It was the bearer of its soil and fertility. It finally became an object of worship. The people venerated it as a deity of the land. It was identical with Osiris and Apis. But this divine Nile was converted into blood, and the bearer of life flowed death. "And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt" (Exod. 7. 21). How was the mighty fallen!

So too the frog had a certain significance in Egypt. It was the symbol of human life in embryo. The frog-headed god is a form of Pthah, the creative or formative principle. But that god lives and dies by the will of the God of Moses. I have said that the sun was the leading deity of Egypt, and that Pharaoh was the sun incarnate. But by the might of the rod of Moses the very light of the sun is darkened. How are the mighty fallen!

The Egyptians were a peculiarly cleanly people. The white linen and personal cleanliness of their priests are famous. The highest orders bathed four times in every twenty-four hours. But these sacredly clean people are made offensive and disgusting with lice and a filthy disease. Thus these miracles discover the utter nothingness of the national divinities.

2. *Again, these miracles are so chosen as to bring a power of persuasion sufficient to convince any rational mind, but not enough to overpower the will of a hardened heart.* It is never the part of the divine plan to drive the human will, at least not until the time of judgment. When all persuasion is resisted, and the heart is irrevocably bound to its purpose, then God's wrath breaks upon the sinner like a whirlwind. Then he cries, "I also will laugh

at your calamity; . . . when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

God will convince but not compel Pharaoh. I am sure that there is a close connection between the manner of these miracles and the expression often repeated in these chapters, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart." This hardening of Pharaoh's heart has been a sore perplexity to Bible readers: nor do I boast of ability to fathom the depth of its meaning. But there is no necessity for us to think that God forced the Egyptian king to sin. Dr. Tayler Lewis, an acknowledged authority in the Hebrew tongue, tells us that there is full warrant for our rendering the expression, "I will brace up his courage." If so, then all it means is, not that God actually makes the king bad, but that he will not allow his courage to break down in the midst of these wonders, before he is ready of his own choice to yield to persuasion. There is many a bad man who does not do the wicked thing he likes simply because he is a coward. His good behavior springs not out of virtue, but from a craven spirit.

Had God so wished, he might have completely broken down Pharaoh's courage while his heart was not a whit changed. But he

adopted a method in dealing with the king by which his real heart would be made to reveal itself. "For this very purpose have I raised thee up," that is, caused thee to stand. That certainly does not mean that God caused Pharaoh to be born and trained, and elevated to the throne of the world-empire for the express purpose of driving him into sin in order that the name of God might be glorified. All that it means is: "I will stay your courage till of your own free choice you yield to my demand. Then you will glorify me and you will be blessed. But in the event of your heart's remaining unchanged after all this display of my power, then I will be glorified in your utter destruction."

To illustrate the wisdom of God's method in securing this result, notice the character of these miracles. The very first miracle that was wrought by Moses in Pharaoh's presence was one which his own magicians could imitate. If when Aaron cast his rod on the floor and it instantly became a serpent, that were the only instance of the kind in history, and utterly inimitable, there would be but little room to doubt the divinity of his claim. But we are informed how that from time immemorial the art of working apparently supernatural effects

on serpents has been practiced by a peculiar class of persons in Egypt and elsewhere in the Orient.

The king, though awed, was not surprised; particularly when the enchanters cast down their rods and they too became serpents. To be sure, when the one swallowed all the rest that was proof that it was superior to them all, yet the fact left room for discussion. "Moses's, after all, is the same in kind as this with which I am familiar." It was just so with other miracles. The stream of blood and the multiplication of frogs were imitated in kind, though not in degree. And so it came to pass that these early miracles left room for doubt in the heart that did not care to believe. "And Pharaoh hardened his heart."

Is not that even so to-day? What greater hindrance does the Church of Christ encounter now than the clear imitation of its virtue by the world? Truth's most formidable foe is the lie that resembles it. The man in love with the world answers the miracles of grace with "I am as good as the Christian." He puts on his morality, his formal worship, his manliness and says, "Behold, my rod has become a serpent too." Once infidelity was defiant and had a phraseology of its own. Now it enters

the Church, occupies the pulpit, carries the cross of Christ on its front. It talks of grace, faith, spirituality as its own. The rankest worldliness calls itself Christian. Jannes and Jambres withstand Moses to the face, resisting the truth by counterfeiting it.

Another thing in this connection: Not to overpower Pharaoh's will, while persuading his conscience, God chooses a series of miracles which were suggestive of things common in the land. All the nine plagues were natural phenomena carried to an unprecedented degree. The river is often red, discolored with mud; the croaking of the frogs is as universal there as the twitter of the swallows here. The vermin, the gnat, the murrain, the locust, the pestilence are by no means strangers there. The hailstorm is not unknown. The sandstorm, carrying the darkness of a starless night, drives the shuddering people to the shelter of their homes.

I will not insult your intelligence by an argument for the supernaturalness of the miracles of Moses. They were of God. I am glad that Christian thought has long since abandoned the superstition that the miraculous is only the unnatural or the anti-natural. The supernatural is the entrance of the divine

will in the sphere of nature, producing conditions which nature alone could not. Really, all nature is one stupendous miracle, for it began and is sustained by the will of Him who is its soul. But for the sake of clear thinking, which does not confound the natural with the supernatural, we accept the common teaching that by nature we understand three things: all material things which are discerned by the senses, the forces that reside in them, and the laws by which those forces are regulated. When anything is wrought in contradiction to these three things it is a miracle; that is simply saying it is a wonder, inexplicable to the common mind. Its very mysteriousness leads to the belief of a supernatural power in it. But it is not necessarily so. The human will can turn the latent forces of coal and water into an Apollo's steeds to drag our chariots. Without that will nature never could have done it. So this mind of ours can discover and utilize occult forces and produce results so stupendous as to force the suggestion on the mind of the uninitiated of the presence of the divine; yet it is only human power acting in the realm of nature. The magicians did so in the presence of Pharaoh. It is a miracle indeed, a wonder, in apparent contradiction to the ordi-

nary course of nature, producing effects that nature alone could not produce. All that may be, and yet not be supernatural.

But if the human will can so alter the ordinary course of nature, why should we hesitate to believe that the divine will should, for purposes of redemption, enter into this sphere of nature and, without violating its laws, produce results surpassing by infinite stretches all that man could do? That is the supernatural. But for one who has made up his mind that he will not believe in God there is always room for doubt of the supernatural when the events occur within the sphere of nature. The unusual is only the natural in which the cause is from us concealed. Do we smile at Pharaoh's idle thought and explain it thus? So did the Sanhedrin explain the resurrection of Jesus. "They stole him away." In this way one eminent scholar explains the resurrection of Lazarus. It is all very simple—a clear trick. So does the rationalistic mind work now. When the Author of nature works after the pattern of his own work men say that it is the method that is God. Nature explains all things.

3. *A third object of God in these miracles was to image forth the methods of grace. For*

example, that last of the ten, when the angel of death swept over the land slaying the first-born of every family save those that were protected by the sprinkled blood of the paschal lamb. How distinctly that typifies our life by the Redeemer's blood! But this requires a sermon by itself, and we leave it for the present and proceed to study

II. THE EFFECT OF THESE MIRACLES ON PHARAOH AND ISRAEL'S RELEASE.

The various steps are so marvelously like those of the soul in breaking away from Satan's chains that I cannot question but that the history was designed by God to be a visible picture of the invisible reality.

1. *The first effect of the demand of Moses upon Pharaoh for Israel's release was this (Exod. 5. 6-9):*

And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein: and let them not regard vain words.

They were worse off than before they asked for liberty. No sooner do desires for a holy life waken within us than our way seems to be hedged up as it never was before. It looks as though the god of this world, fearing that he is going to lose a soul, doubles its bonds. Did you ever know a man who was just on the point of deciding for God that some unusually unpleasant thing did not occur to help defeat the consummation of grace? Nor is this fact altogether a seeming one. A call to a better life often awakens the very devil in us and impels us on to worse sin than ever. I knew a young man who during a temperance revival became so maddened by the appeals to his conscience that he vowed, "I will show them how they will make a teetotaler of me," and plunged into excesses of drink such as he never before thought were possible. Thus the gospel became a savor of death.

The story of John Bunyan is often told: how to stifle conviction he plunged deeper and deeper into sin; and then, feeling that he had sinned so grievously that there was no salvation for him, he reeled on the edge of the abyss of despair. I have heard men say that they never had more hateful, horrible thoughts come into their minds than when they were

seriously seeking release from Satan's bonds. This is that mystery of sin of which Paul speaks, "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." When the law of God is brought to our hearts by the Spirit with great power, the first effect is to waken the natural heart to a violent revolt against it. In that sense, at least, to unveil sin is to produce it. It is an experience often observed that man always inclines to the forbidden fruit. Even Paul, who from his childhood aspired to the holiest, confesses that when the commandment was pressed home upon his conscience, such was the moral unsoundness of his heart that it "wrought in him all manner of concupiscence." If such was the experience of one of the noblest natures in history, what can we expect of the average man? It is an hour of travail and of imminent peril when a new life is to be born in the world. The demon, just before he leaves the possessed, rends and tears him, and casts him frothing to the ground.

Then, too, the awakened desire for righteousness is sure to be accompanied with an awful sense of personal sinfulness. The evil spirit whispers, "You are not good enough." I quote an instance from Dr. G. F. Pentecost: "I am a

lost soul," cried George Whitefield's brother, one day, while sitting at table with Lady Huntingdon, his brother, and some other earnest Christians who were talking of the things of the kingdom. "Thank God for that," cried Lady Huntingdon; "for now I am sure the Lord has begun a good work in you." Conviction of sin, and the struggle of the old man to get out of the grip of God's law, are not pleasant experiences; but they precede conversion. If there is a sinner who has been disturbed by the preaching of God's Word, let him thank God for arousing him out of the death-sleep of indifference.

2. *The next step of Satan's resistance* is, "And Pharaoh called for Moses . . . and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land" (Exod. 8. 25). And that is almost the first snare that Satan lays for the soul that has resolved to serve God: "Be a Christian and at the same time be a worldling. Stay in Egypt." One would suppose that would be an impossibility, the Church and the world are so widely separated in God's Word: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

But the contradiction is wedded in more ways than one. There are some men who live a sort of dual life—in the places of their resi-

dence devoted Christians, and in the cities of their business mammon-worshippers. There are others who for ten months at home are godly men, but for two months of vacation are regular worldlings. There are others still who "sacrifice in the land." They never quit the worldly life at all. They build their altars, put a construction on their creed to suit themselves, arrange a form of worship to gratify their carnal tastes, and hire priests who will give them for gospel, science, rhetoric, ethical culture, claptrap, and leave their consciences asleep.

Brothers, if the world love us, we are not of God. True godliness is an abomination unto Egypt. Moses said, "It is not meet so to do; . . . shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes?" Preach charity to the greedy, purity to the unclean, honesty to gambling speculators, brotherhood to the exclusive, kindness to the cruel, holiness to the sinful, and you sacrifice an abomination to the Egyptians.

An attempt to remain in the land and keep our life in Christ a secret is like trying to kindle a fire and suppress the heat and flame. The very law of the divine life is diffusion. As soon as it enters the human heart it begins to

spread itself abroad. If it does not, it perishes. It is said of Jesus that he could not be hid. And that is true in measure of everyone who companionships with him. A single instance, which I give from the observation of one of our most effective evangelists, illustrates fully the utter impossibility of concealment of a genuine Christian life. He said he knew of a man who was converted at one of his meetings in America. He was a commercial traveler. He determined that he would not let anybody know that he had been converted. He was going to serve God "in the land." Well, only the day after he was converted he was standing in front of one of the large hotels in Boston when he was accosted by one of his fellow commercial men. "How are you, old fellow?" said his friend, in the familiar style of an old acquaintance; "come in, and have a drink," and started at once toward the barroom. Here was a crisis. Instantly it occurred to our newly converted friend, who was going to keep his conversion a secret, that to go into a public bar with an ungodly friend, and hold fellowship with him over a glass of whisky, would be utterly inconsistent with his new life in Christ. What was he to do? He thought he would excuse himself. So he said, "No, thank

you; I think I will not drink to-day." This did not satisfy his friend. "Why, what's up? I never knew you to refuse a drink before." "Well, I don't feel like drinking to-day, that's all." "Well, come in and have a cigar, then." But this also was declined. He was unwilling to go into the public house and fraternize with his friend over the bar. Again the astonished questioner asked, "Why, what's the matter with you? Come along." "No, I can't go to-day," said our secret convert in great confusion; and then stammered out, hardly knowing what he said, "I have a Friend with me." "O, that's all right. Bring your friend with you; any friend of yours is welcome to drink at my expense." "No, I cannot bring him in; in fact, he would not go in there," said the young convert, things beginning to clear a little in his mind. "Then come without him; it will take you but a moment." "No, I will not go without *him*." Looking about among the bystanders, the inviter said, "Where is your friend? and who is he, that he won't come in and have a drink; and that you can't leave for a moment to have a glass with an old friend?" There was nothing for it now but to confess: and so, with some trembling, and yet with perfect frankness, he said to his acquaint-

ance, "The fact is I only last night became a Christian. I did not mean to say anything about it; but you compel me to speak. My Friend is the Lord Jesus Christ. He would not go into that barroom, and take a drink, I am sure; and by the grace of God I do not mean to go anywhere or do anything that will make me part company with Jesus Christ." You see that man could not keep his conversion a secret.

3. Yielding a little, *the next step in Satan's resistance* is, "I will let you go, only ye shall not go very far away." "Be a Christian, but not an out-and-out one. Be just enough a Christian to save your souls; just over the border. Abide there, not *in* the world but near enough to it to get what of it you want." Alas that so many are snared by this compromise of Satan! To live just over the border means a return again sooner or later to the world. And in that return two dreadful things occur. The heart of the backslider is sevenfold harder and more unbelieving and hopeless than it was before it chose to give up the world. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse

with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Pet. 2. 20-22).

The effect of this return is disastrous also to the conscience of the unsaved. Every backslider is a witness against Christ, his testimony being that, having tried the divine life, he has found it untrue and in no way comparable to that of the world. "Not far away" is the most unhappy place conceivable for a soul seeking to worship his God. The most wretched man in the world is he whose life is where his heart is not. He swings like a pendulum between conscience and desire. He is torn by an internal schism like the fabled sufferer who was torn asunder by three horses. Then, too, he is weak, not because of the want of the elements of power in him, but because the forces are in antagonism, like two engines pulling asunder. With great expense of strength the result is a negative.

To those who are neither one thing nor the other, feeble, wretched, in constant danger of becoming false witnesses of Christ, I would say, "Get you three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord your God." Put

the desert and the sea between you and Egypt.

4. *The next point of resistance* is, "Go, but not your wives and children." Ah, if they left their families behind, they would surely return. Let our resolution be like that of Joshua, "As for me *and my house*, we will serve the Lord."

5. *The last point of resistance* is, "Go and serve your Lord; only let your flocks and herds be stayed." When every other thing fails Satan thinks to entrap the soul with suggestions of property. "Well, if you *will* be a Christian, be one; but you would better leave your money in the world. What has business to do with religion? Suppose your money *is* invested in questionable ways, leave it there, where it yields the largest revenues. That will not affect the soul. On the contrary, it will give you all the more opportunity to do large things for your God." O, the Israelites who have gone to the feast of God, while their wealth is in Egypt: gambling, oppressing, making drunkards, breaking homes and hearts! Let there be no deception here. God demands *all*.

V

THE PASSOVER

Exod. 12. 11-14: "It is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever."

THAT was a magnificent night in Egypt when the destroying angel swept over the land, destroying the firstborn. I wish I could describe it. But who can describe a moonlit scene under a cloudless Egyptian sky? Painters have attempted it, and partly succeeded in putting the spirit of such a night on canvas. I have seen such a picture. The pyramids with one face illuminated and the others black with shadow, are far more weird than in the blaze of day. The bright edges of the obelisks make them look as if they were indeed shafts of the sun which they were sup-

posed to represent. The glow upon the face of the Sphinx deepens the mystery of his person. The long temple avenues, the colossal statues, the temple walls, the palaces and the huts—windows red with light from within—all are awful with a magic spell. No land could be more awe-inspiring than Egypt by moonlight.

It is just such an hour as this that we behold when we look through our text upon that night of thirty-five centuries ago. Everything is hushed but the voices of the night. If Byron were there, he would whisper,

“There is a dangerous stillness in the hour,
A stillness which leaves the soul full room
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control.”

No sound is heard in the palace of the king save the tread of the sentinel and his occasional shout, “All is well.” Egypt sleeps unconscious or defiant of her peril. But Israel is awake. On the doorposts and lintels of their huts are great bloodstains. Smoke rises from every chimney, for within they are roasting the lamb. If we could look within, we would see every one of those two million slaves prepared for a journey—sandals on, garments girdled, portable goods packed. But they no

longer look like slaves. The shackles are fallen from their spirits, and the new life which pulses within has thrown the flush of joyous liberty upon their faces. This is the night of their redemption. At midnight a shriek of anguish is heard, then another and another, till it rolls like a wail of sorrow all over the proud empire. In every Egyptian home there lies the firstborn dead. Soon the command is carried from the palace throughout the land of Goshen, "Get thee out." Let us gather up the main facts of the passover and inquire for their spiritual significance.

I. IT WAS THE TIME OF ISRAEL'S REDEMPTION FROM BONDAGE.

When the sun went down that night they were all slaves. Before dawn they marched forth two million freemen. God's hammer, after many strokes of power, had at last shattered their fetters. So great an event marks a new era in the history of the chosen people, and when we consider the influence of that event on the subsequent history of the world it marks the beginning of a new era in time. In the roll of the centuries it seemed as if the wheels of time had spent their momentum and were coming slowly to a standstill. The

events of this memorable night started them moving again, and with temporary exceptions they have gone on with increasing velocity up to the present hour. With this fact before him I am not surprised at the extravagant utterance of the scholarly Bunsen: "History began with the exodus." Extravagant as that may be, it is a literal truth that real history, whether of the nation or of the individual, begins with the new life we have by God's redeeming power.

God himself emphasizes this fact in the command that Israel change its calendar, and reckon the beginning of the year with this night: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." The old year began in September; but this night of spring, the last of March or the early part of April, begins a new year. The first day of the sacred year is the day of redemption.

Many centuries later Christian intelligence, recognizing the fact that the great significance of history is redemption, altered its calendar from U. C. (*Urbæ Condita*)—the foundation of Rome—to A. D. (*Anno Domini*), and so dated the years from the time of the appearance of the Redeemer. The individual Chris-

tian too believes that he really began to live not in his first but in his second birth. I once congratulated an aged saint of God that she had lived for ninety-five years without the failure of her mental faculties, when she replied that she was but seventy-five years old. Thinking that it was a momentary lapse of memory I named the year of her birth. She at once replied: "At that time this body was born. But twenty years later I was born again, and then began to live." I imagine that if the redeemed in glory keep a record of time, they will date its beginning at the time they came into the life of God.

II. THIS REDEMPTION WAS WROUGHT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH THE BLOOD OF A SLAIN LAMB.

I am not sure that Moses understood the full meaning of those blood spots sprinkled on the doorposts of the people's huts. He simply believed God and did as he was commanded. "Through faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of the blood." He did know, however, that there was a sacred significance in that blood of the lamb, for it was made the most prominent feature of that most solemn hour. And, furthermore, it was com-

manded that the ordinance be perpetuated to the end of time, as though it had a meaning far beyond the present deliverance, a meaning for the far-off ages. "And ye shall keep it a feast for a memorial forever."

Its meaning was afterward more clearly unfolded in the elaborate ceremonial which God gave his people. I will not rehearse the tedious symbolism; but one great thought in it was the altar, on which was sprinkled the blood of the lamb; and it was a sacrifice for sin. An essential principle in the entire Jewish ceremonial was, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." And all that, according to the prophets, pointed to the Redeemer, slain from the foundation of the world. The last of the prophets recognized Jesus as the one to whom all the others alluded. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." It is a fact of history, and very significant, that Jesus was actually slain on this very date, the preparation of the feast of the passover.

The apostles call Christ the great Archetype of the lamb of the passover. "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7). Peter says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as

silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1. 18). We read in the book of Revelation: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5. 8-10). This, then, is the eternal truth of the type, though then not known by the people—*salvation by the blood of the Redeemer.*

Nor was it at all necessary that the people grasp its meaning. It is not our understanding of the divine methods that saves us, but our use of them. The very moment that these Israelites passed under the blood into their homes they were no longer Egypt's bondsmen but God's sons. As midnight drew near, and they thought of the awful doom that was pend-

ing, if any fear arose in their hearts, all they had to do was to remember, "The blood is there," and reassure their hearts. As the fatal hour struck and the fearful cry went up from the stricken homes, if then they trembled with any apprehension, they had only to remember, "I am sheltered under the blood." And that is our shelter—yours and mine—not our understanding of the atonement, but the atonement. "O," said a dying man whom I was trying to point to the Saviour, "I am confounded by that awful mystery of the atonement." I asked him, "Do you understand the drugs you are taking to relieve your pain?" When he replied that he did not I asked him again, "Why do you take them?" and he replied, "If I can trust my physician, I am sure that I can trust my Saviour."

I know that there are many who, like Ziporah, do not relish this mysterious doctrine which so baffles the thought of men. But, as Macintosh says, "That antagonism is as old as Cain." He disdained to offer a sacrifice of blood. He would be intelligent: he will bring his works—"The fruit of my toil I will give."

Cut out from the New Testament everything promised through the blood of Christ, and what dreadful holes have you made in the

precious record! Forgiveness, justification, regeneration, peace, joy, sanctification, rest, hope, resurrection, heaven, robes washed white, the song of the redeemed—all these are ours through the blood.

III. A third fact I must state in discussing the passover. THE BLOOD WAS ON THE OUTSIDE AND HAD REFERENCE TO GOD; BUT THOSE WHO WERE WITHIN AND THUS SHELTERED, WERE ENGAGED IN A FEAST.

A feast represents joy. We have so long associated this feast with that last sad night which Jesus spent on earth in mortal flesh that we are very apt to overlook the fact that an essential feature of it was gladness. Afterward, when the idea of the feast was more fully expanded in the Jewish ceremonial, they celebrated the passover for a full week with the greatest joy; with music and song and feasting and converse. It was a week of profound gladness. The divine life, as typified in the Jewish feasts, was not merely of hallowed cheerfulness but outbursting joyfulness. "Passover had the joy of deliverance; Pentecost, the gladsomeness of harvest home; tabernacles, the delight of settled rest."

We are apt to think of God's people as sober

and austere, in contrast with the gay life of the world. It is a mistake. Listen to those psalms which are the outpouring of the heart. How they resound with glad anthems! It seems in some instances as if the heart were fairly bursting with joy. It not only sings but it cries out for all others to help. It invokes harp, organ, and every breathing thing. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." And that certainly is the fact in the Christian life. Almost the first conscious emotion we experience when we come into the new life by the atoning Saviour is that of joy. "O, Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." Our hymns abound in exultant cries:

O how happy are they
 Who their Saviour obey
 And have laid up their treasures above.

With us no melancholy void,
 No moment lingers unemployed,
 Or unimproved, below:
 Our weariness of life is gone,
 Who live to serve our God alone,
 And only thee to know.

True pleasures abound in the rapturous sound,
 And whoever hath found it, hath paradise found:
 My Redeemer to know, to feel his blood flow,
 This is life everlasting—'tis heaven below.

Yet onward I haste to the heavenly feast;
That indeed is the fullness, but this is the taste;
And this I shall prove, till with joy I remove
To the heaven of heavens in Jesus's love.

This feast of joy embraces several particulars.

1. *They ate the flesh of the lamb.* Christ, our Lamb, is the Christian's food. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever" (John 6. 53-58). To feed on Christ is to take his thoughts, assimilate his spirit, imitate his example, walk in his steps.

There is one fact in that feasting I would emphasize. The *whole* lamb was to be eaten. It was to be roasted whole, without severing or disjuncting any of the bones, and nothing was

to be left when the feast was over. It is astonishing how many men there are who claim Christ as the representative of their ideas and their cause. The Unitarians claim him as the perfect man. The Spiritualist claims him as the Advocate of the spirits holding intercourse with mortal men. The Socialist claims him as the champion of the poor against the rich. The moralist claims him as a perfect example. There is hardly an opinion but appeals to him as its best impersonation.

Ah! but the divine command is not to eat a choice part, but the whole lamb. No divided Christ can bring us the joy of the feast. The whole is ours; the perfect Man, the perfect God, the highest morality, the profoundest spirituality, the divine Example, the Author of life—"Christ all and in all."

2. *Another feature of the passover feast was the unleavened bread.* Leaven in Scripture is typical of evil, which, mixed with good, leavens the whole. Unleavened bread therefore means the entire removal of evil from our daily life. So important was this for the enjoyment of the feast that in the fuller development of the law the Israelite was commanded to search his house with the greatest care for some time previous to the feast, lest

by any accident any leaven should be there. Let me not make a wrong impression here. It was not the bread that saved Israel. He was saved by the single fact that he was sheltered by the blood; but the joy of the redeemed could not be his with the leavened bread, that is, with the admixture of evil. It is not our holiness of life that saves us. The laying aside of evil is the consequence of our salvation, rather than its saving cause. "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5. 7, 8).

The scriptural order is not that we do holy things, and so become holy, but by Christ's work we are holy, therefore do holy things. It is not our living right that makes us Christians, but the fact that we are Christians requires our living right. As Paul says to the Colossians, "Ye are dead: . . . mortify therefore your members which are upon earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

3. *The bitter herbs are a relish.* They are a plain allusion to the bitterness of the Egyp-

tian bondage, and in their larger application to our bondage to sin. The remembrance of that from which we have been delivered gives relish to the feast. No man perhaps would say that the hour of conversion was as rich in blessing as those that come later in life, away on the sunny slopes of Zion. Yet there is a peculiar joyfulness in the remembrance of those early days we lived in Christ. "O, happy day, that fixed my choice!" How exultant is David's song!—"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Psa. 40. 1-4).

4. *Ready for a journey.* Be equipped, sandaled, packed, waiting for the summons. The Christian is always in readiness. This is not his true home. He stands waiting the call to duty, to conflict, to sacrifice, to death.

VI

THE GOD-WROUGHT DELIVERANCE

Exod. 15. 21: "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

THIS is the theme of one of the earliest of the Hebrew lyrics which have been preserved for us. It is thought by some that the eighty-eighth psalm was moaned in doleful strophe and antistrophe by the people in their Egyptian slavery, but that is very doubtful. We can hardly think of the children of Abraham, who were familiar with the epic of creation and other song fragments which Moses has transmitted to us in his book of Genesis, being altogether without songs of their own. Yet the first one of Hebrew origin of which we are positively sure is this song of Moses by the sea. It is a magnificent ode, the tremendous outburst of holy passion, created by a correspondingly tremendous occasion.

We have heard it objected that an ode like this presupposes a degree of culture such as was impossible among these slaves. But the

best poetry is the spontaneous outburst of feeling, finding expression by creative genius. If poets are born and not made, it is even more true of their poems. At least, the very best elements of their poems are not the product of their culture but of their feelings, overleaping all limits of time and artificial conventionalities.

There are doubtless many marks of high culture in this triumphal ode, but its distinguishing feature is its tumultuous passion, which blows like the blasts of the wind through the bending forests. Its art lines however need not distress us, for the man who wrote it was in every way qualified. Educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, then living for forty years in the deep silences of the wilderness in communion with the Infinite One, then stirred to the innermost by a divine call and a mighty personal victory, and now standing on the edge of a destiny which had been the profoundest hope of his ancestors, the sea behind him and Jehovah leading him on, what better equipment can we imagine for the production of this pæan of victory?

Besides all this, there is that in the ode which ought to satisfy the least musical mind of its antiquity, fitting this hour as none other

in the history of the Hebrew race. Its structure is such as a later age would not produce. It is archaic, having Egyptian words, and words which in later time were dropped from the Hebrew speech. Moreover, it has a freedom of movement which not even its parallelisms can obstruct. My purpose, however, is not to discuss the song, but to consider the event that evoked it, which event has meanings for us who are removed from it by many ages. That historic event, like Pilgrim's Progress, images the experiences of the soul to the end of time. It helps us understand God's dealings with us, shows us how to bear ourselves in his mysterious leadings, and thus makes it possible for us to hear the music of this same song, making melody in our hearts. It has been sung by millions of believers since that day when Miriam and her companions shouted the refrain with music and dance. John heard it in the glory-land. May we also, even now, strike our cymbals and thrum our harps and lift up our voices in glad cry, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."

Let us consider the difficult situation into which Israel was brought by the providence of God, and the miraculous deliverance,

I. THE PERILOUS SITUATION.

“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. . . . And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness” (Exod. 13. 17-20). The usual way from Goshen to Mount Sinai, whither God had pledged Moses to bring his people (Exod. 3. 12), was around the northern shore of what is now known as the Bitter Lakes, which at that time was the extreme end of the Gulf of Suez, the most northerly arm of the Red Sea. There was a broad bar under the waters of this arm, which has since lifted till it has separated the lakes from the sea, and which is now pierced by the canal. Seemingly the only way for Israel to reach its destination was to travel south on the eastern side of the water. But by the divine command the hosts were turned back. “The Lord

spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea" (Exod. 14. 1, 2). Of all the ways which human wisdom would suggest not to go this was the one. The fugitives came to a place where the impassable Pi-hahiroth shut them off on the south; Migdol walled them in on the west; the sea rolled its surf against them on the east. The only thinkable way for them to move next was to turn back again toward the land of their bondage. Pharaoh saw at once that, thus entangled in the wilderness, it would be an easy thing for him to overpower the host and enslave them anew. Hence he gathered his swift horses and chariots and trained soldiers, and hastened in hot pursuit. Destruction seemed imminent.

How accurately this describes the frequent experience of God's children, who in all confidence have followed his leadings! Was there ever a burdened sinner who sought deliverance from his bonds who did not find himself very soon in a position which seemingly gave him no alternative but to return to his bondage? The reason of it is disclosed in this

GOD-WROUGHT DELIVERANCE 107

story. *They are brought to a place where there is no conceivable way of deliverance but by the power of God.* If Israel had gone the other way, which was so simple and natural, it would have given room for the belief that their deliverance was chiefly by the power of their own will and courage rather than by "the outstretched arm of the Almighty." While it is certain that no man can be saved *without* his will, it is equally true that no man can be saved *by* his will. Salvation stands not in what we have done, but in what God has done. Not our righteousness nor our faith, but our Redeemer saves us. After the crossing of the sea there never could be any question that the deliverance was all of God. "*He hath triumphed gloriously.*" And it is well for us to be taught this fact right at the beginning of our new life, even though it be by bringing us to the brink of despair.

There is still another reason for this route on the western shore of the sea. *This way reduces to a minimum the probability of a return.* "Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." With the sea behind Israel the way of their return is shut off. God may open the way for their advance; but if they change their mind,

they must find their own way back. The very thing that seemed to hinder their progress, when overcome, is itself a barrier to a return. Besides, as Moses sings in this pæan, the victory of God over the greatest of the world powers is warrant that all others must eventually be mastered. "Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away." The victory of the past is the assurance of the future.

All this which is exhibited so vividly in our experience of conversion occurs with great frequency in our daily life, when we have sought to find and follow the leadings of God's hand. Sincerely following him, we have been led into places of great difficulty where we are forced to think either God has misled us or we were left to ourselves. In either case our hearts are darkened by what seems to be the withdrawal of the divine leadership. And that is the blackness of despair for one who loves God.

II. HOW SHALL WE BEAR OURSELVES IN THESE HOURS OF EXTREMITY?

This incident gives a full and satisfactory answer which may be put in three simple rules.

1. *Do not lose courage.* With destruction impending, these people had every human reason to lose heart. In wild agitation, which is not to be mistaken for earnest faith, they cried unto the Lord. Then Moses by divine command said, "Fear ye not." And the crags echoed back the words as from the mouth of God himself, "Fear ye not." How many of us in similar perplexity have cried out in this same spirit! Even the saintly Frederick W. Faber is familiar with its anguish and has sung its meaning for us all:

O it is hard to work for God,
 To rise and take his part
 Upon this battlefield of earth,
 And not sometimes lose heart!

He hides himself so wondrously,
 As though there were no God;
 He is least seen when all the powers
 Of ill are most abroad;

Or he deserts us in the hour
 The fight is all but lost;
 And seems to leave us to ourselves
 Just when we need him most.

It is not so, but so it looks;
 And we lose courage then;
 And doubts will come if God hath kept
 His promises to men.

But, as seen in the history before us, discouragement at such a time is not only unreasonable, it is unchristian and wicked. I say it is wicked, and for two reasons. Its root is unbelief. If we love God and are sincerely seeking his will to obey it, then his honor is pledged that he will bring us out of our difficulties successfully. To use the language of our fathers, "All the attributes of the Infinite Godhead are pledged to our support." And his honor is attested by all his dealings with us in the past. Because of what has been we may be sure of the present hour. David, in one of the most harassing experiences of his history, lost for the time his sense of the Divine Presence; but he recovered his hope and his confidence in part by just remembering. "O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." Who of us as we recall the past cannot say, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me"? Dr. G. F. Pentecost exhorts us to keep a record of God's dealings with us, for out of such a record we may be sure we shall find a long line of precedent deliverances; and he illustrates the fact by an incident in the history of a sailor friend of his. He said:

“My friend, who, though a young man, has made many voyages round Cape Horn, both to and from the East, told me that once he was in the beginning of what promised to be a most terrific storm, but with all sail crowded on he was running before the advancing gale. Flying before the wind, he overhauled a large ship with shortened sail and all in readiness to encounter the impending storm. As he was flying past the captain of the ship with shortened sail cried out to him with trumpet to his lips, warning him to take in canvas, or he would be caught in the storm and wrecked. ‘But,’ said my friend, ‘I knew better. I had doubled the Cape many times, and at the same season,’ he said, ‘and by consulting my log I found that if I crowded on all sail I should run out of the storm before it broke upon me.’” And, in fact, he did so, while the ship which shortened sail was caught in it and wrecked. There is great advantage in keeping a record of God’s former mercies, for by that record we may know substantially what we may expect in connection with the present need.

In addition to the pledge of God’s honor we have his direct statements. “Verily thou shalt be fed.” He is our “Rock of Refuge,” our “Tower of Strength,” our “Wall of Fire.”

We know of no conceivable condition of want that the promises of God's Word do not meet. They blossom on every page like the daisies in the field; they sparkle in our night like the stars; they hide us from behind like the pillar of cloud; they lead us on like the fire in the front of Israel's ranks.

And all this is confirmed by the analogies of nature. The summer cloud, thunder-charged, passes over us; darkness gathers; the trees bend, screaming; the forked lightnings pierce the gloom and the whole atmosphere is moaning. But the calm and seeing heart knows that "these very clouds are freighted with sheaves of wheat and shocks of corn and vineyards ripening for the press." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Discouragement means doubt of God's honor, his previous dealings with you, all his precious promises, the analogies of nature, and the character and word of Jesus. That is wicked unbelief.

We pronounce discouragement wicked for

another reason: it unfits us for present duty. The roses you planted on the northern side of your house did not come to the splendor of bloom like those which grew in the sunshine. Not only so, but, enfeebled in the shadow, they lost vitality and were unable to resist the attacks of the vermin which suck their nourishment from that which otherwise would have been a wealth of flower. Discouragement is something more than a mere negative loss. It invites positive harm; it is a disease which poisons not only its own heart, but fills the very air, and lowers the vital tone of home, the school, the office, the Church.

The merchant who is all the while expecting failure courts the very thing he fears. The boy who thinks he cannot learn his lesson is the boy who does not try with any strength of mastery, and is sure to fail. To be suspicious of slander and abuse is to invite them. To imagine and fear sickness is to put yourself in the condition to experience it. What is true in every department of our being is true also of our religious life. The prayer of unfaith fails. Effort made with doubt is painfully ineffective. Courage, assurance, faith—these are the mastering forces in our

divine life. Hence our first rule is, Keep courage. Be brave.

2. *Have patience.* Moses cried, "Be still." There are times in our spiritual life when we have but little else to do but to stand still and wait. Having reached the limit of our endeavor, and no word coming to us from God, then "be still."

By the command of patience is not meant indolence. It is plain that the first meaning of Moses's word was, "Do not become alarmed and run away from the divine arrangements." We can imagine that many of these people were trying to escape: some climbing the Pihahiroth, where they would surely meet disaster; some rushing to the sea only to be driven back by the surf; some, like lions at bay, meditating fight, which was certain destruction; others, with craven spirit, purposing a voluntary return to their slavery. For all these the words reverberate along the rocks—"Be still." The time of waiting is not a time of inactivity, only the activity is mainly within, in prayer and meditation. By it more than by any outward actions we are prepared for the revelation of the glory of the Lord.

God has a purpose in all our providential troubles, as surely as he had in this event on

the western shore of the Red Sea. To have revealed that purpose prematurely might possibly have defeated it, and Pharaoh would not have been destroyed. To judge while the plan is unfolding is to misjudge. When Paul and Silas went to Philippi to preach the gospel they met with apparent defeat at the very beginning of their mission. They found themselves cast in the dungeon with their feet fast in the stocks. But there was no panic there arising out of distrust of God's providence. They "waited." They spent the time in prayer and song till the earth shook, the prison walls trembled, the stocks flew open, and the men were free. The sequel is everywhere known. The gospel had a wider and better hearing because of the hindrance than it possibly could have had without the official interference. In your trouble "be still," else you will have your harshest thoughts of God when he is planning the very best for you.

3. While there seems to be nothing for you to do bearing directly on your deliverance, *proceed calmly in your homely daily tasks.* It seems that Moses himself became somewhat alarmed in that fearful hour and began crying out to the Lord. God replied: "Wherefore criest thou unto me? . . . Lift thou up thy

rod." It was only a humble shepherd crook. There was certainly no power of a sword or a chariot in that simple instrument of toil. But that was the thing that God used as the instrument of his power. We measure the great results that are needed by our humble effort; and because we cannot see how there is any connection between our works and the great end we are tempted to cease working. God teaches us that the impossible belongs with him. The possible is ours. Let us do the thing we can.

III. THE MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE.

The story is told in Exod. 19. 19-31. There is but one more impressive scene related in God's Word than this final act of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and that is the crucifixion.

What a sublime scene was that when a strong east wind laid bare the depth of the sea!—the seething waters piling up on the right and on the left and tossing the foam over the hosts, "baptizing them unto Moses"; the full paschal moon glowing through the driving spray; the pillar of cloud hanging like an impenetrable veil between the people and their foes; the wild music of the winds mingling

with the hoarse roar of the sea; the hearts of the fugitives awed with the profound conviction that they were led by the God of Abraham.

When, safe on the other shore, they saw their enemies overwhelmed in the returning billows, there could be no other thought in their mind but that their deliverance was of God; and then they joined with unquestioning assurance in the song of Moses, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

1. *There is no way to explain this stupendous event but as the act of Him who made the sea and the land, and who turns all history to the purposes of redemption.* There are those who, while accepting the historic fact, would explain it as only a natural occurrence. The strong east wind which to-day often holds back the tide of the Red Sea blew the waters away from that great sand bar we described a little while ago which now separates the Bitter Lakes from the head of the sea. On this bar, thus exposed, the hosts passed over. The wind died down while the Egyptians were crossing, and the waters rushed back in fury and engulfed them all. "The waters walled on the right and the left," is only a figurative state-

ment of the fact that they were separated. Thus the whole thing is reduced to a natural phenomenon. But in thus explaining away the miraculous elements in the deliverance of Israel they leave in hopeless mystery that still more marvelous fact, the birth of the revelation people at that time from a multitude of abject slaves into a compacted nation, with a vitality and an idea which were to outlast all time.

We are reminded of what the witty Ebrard once said in reply to the rationalists who would eliminate all the supernatural elements from the life of Jesus, while they continued to believe in him: "And at that time it happened that *nothing happened*: and then out of this vacuum there came forth the greatest event in the history of the world, that from which the human race took a new era whence to date its historic years."

A people with a destiny that had been foretold for centuries, and which a hundred years of abject slavery could not crush, are brought by a series of stupendous occurrences to a critical point where they would have been utterly overwhelmed but for the accident of a strong east wind. Out of nothing came something, and that the most enduring something

that human history has ever witnessed—a people through whom, in exact accordance with the Abrahamic covenant, God has given to the world its divine Book, its Christ, its redemption.

We may rest assured that that was no mere chance wind. It was the outstretched arm of the Almighty. A fixed order of things that men choose to call nature does not restrain the will of Him who turns all things to the purposes of his grace. Nature is none other than God in action. His will entered into the original creation for the making of a man, and his will continues in all its movements till the purpose of it all is achieved, and we all stand in the likeness of his eternal Son.

2. *The meaning of all this for us is that ours is a supernatural salvation.* It is not a mere evolution, the unfolding of a great scheme of nature. Like the origin of life, it came out of the creative energy of Him who is the source of all being. The event of the world's redemption, corresponding to Israel's passage through the sea, is the crucifixion. There it really looked as though all the efforts of God to save mankind had ended in hopeless disaster.

The scene on the brow of Calvary surpasses in impressiveness that of the passage of the

sea as its meanings are profounder and broader. When the Son of God hung on the cursed tree between the dying malefactors and cried, "It is finished," his pursuers doubtless thought, "Yes, that ends all the hopes that centered in him." Even his disciples had a similar thought. They were entangled in the wilderness. Nature shuddered, the sun hid her face and threw a pall of darkness over the terrified city. Graves opened, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, horror stalked abroad. But that hour of terror which seemed the destruction of the world's hope was, in fact, the hour of its deliverance. It was the consummation of God's own redemption work. We cannot repeat it too often. It is supernatural—God's victory for us. And in that fact is the certainty of all things else. Palestina, Edom, Moab, sang Moses in full assurance, will bow to Him who has conquered Pharaoh. The greater includes all the rest. And such is our assurance. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

VII

MARAH

Exod. 15. 23: "And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah."

I. THE EARLY PERIOD OF THE DIVINE LIFE IS VERY DISAPPOINTING.

This important period is usually ushered in with marvelous displays of divine power and overflowing joyfulness. In our flight from Egypt we have seen the outstretched arm of the Almighty. Impossibilities have been accomplished. The impassable sea has opened a pathway. Our pursuers have been overwhelmed. We have sung the song of Moses as the billows rolled between us and the land of our bondage.

The hosts of Israel on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, singing and dancing for irrepressible joy, are a truthful picture of the young convert. Hear his song. There is the exultation of victory: "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the

sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name." There is the flush of a confidence not tempered by experience: "The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased." There is the largest expectation, based upon the victory of the present hour: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea."

Forming our opinion of the Christian life by what we have already experienced, we look forward to green pastures and still waters, a delightful highway, such as Isaiah sings:

“And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” But sooner or later we are sure to come into an experience which has its appropriate image in the wilderness of Shur.

That portion of the wilderness over which Israel traveled for the first three days after crossing the sea is described by an observing traveler (Dr. Palmer) as the most desolate of the entire Sinaitic peninsula. It is a vast gravel bed between the shore of the sea and the rocky ledge on the east, with no tree and, with rare exceptions, not a spear of grass; without habitation and no streams. The country pre-

sents one dull monotony of sand and sky. The air is dry and hot, like that of an oven. The sand is heated till it is painful to the touch; the sun pours down its rays like shafts of death. Even the glare of the moon is almost as deadly as that of the sun. Hence the force of the Hebrew figure, "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." The shadow of an occasional limestone rock is a boon indeed. Could you see the Arabs fighting for a place in that shadow, you would appreciate the figure, "The shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Here too occur with great frequency those sandstorms of which we have heard so much. Dean Stanley, Miss Martineau, Niebuhr, and many others experienced them there. Stanley describes one: "Sheets of sand fleet along the desert like streams of water. The whole air is filled, though invisibly, with a tempest of sand driving in your face like sleet. Everything is lost to view save the very nearest objects." Oftentimes the traveler's only safety is to lie flat on the sand which creeps from under him like the undertow of the sea, while the tempest rolls over him like immense waves.

The noise of these storms is peculiar; un-

like the pipings of Pan or the roar of Neptune, it screams and howls like demons led by the prince of the power of the air. Hence the force of Moses's description, "a howling wilderness." When there is no storm the silence is oppressive. No voice of bird or beast or man is heard save that of your own company. Dr. James Strong told me with his voice hushed as in the presence of the dying, "It is the silence of death." And that oppressiveness is heightened by the bleaching bones of many a camel which has perished on his journey. These are the features of Shur—monotony, desolation, heat, peril, silence, death. How Israel must have suffered the contrast with the luxuriance of the land of its bondage!

The distant appearance of vegetation, which is a proof of water, is always an inexpressible joy to the traveler. Even the stupid camel quickens his pace, and in his awkward way expresses his great pleasure. Such was the joyful hope of Israel on the third day in the wilderness when they saw on the horizon the waters of Marah glistening in the sun. But imagine their bitter disappointment when they stooped to drink and found them unfit for use. Their hope fell back in despair upon

their hearts. They named the spring "Bitterness," and murmured, saying, "What shall we drink?"

I believe that almost every Christian can point to some such period in his spiritual life. Usually it comes early in his career, but I have known those who say that it has come much later. In these later instances, however, I believe that it has followed some great victory or notable blessing. These are periods of protracted spiritual dearth. Thirsty are God's children, and they go to what promise to be waters of refreshment, only to find them bitter. The closet hours are hours of weariness, exhausting rather than refreshing; the service is lifeless. It is a wonder to them how anyone can get comfort out of worship at all. Devotional books are stagnant pools, repulsive rather than inviting. Even the Bible is a dull book. Most pastors have been approached by excellent people who have bitterly condemned themselves because they do not and cannot relish the Word of God. Thus the most sacred things, full of promise, are in the realization but the bitter waters of Marah.

II. AS TO THESE EXPERIENCES, I WOULD SAY THAT IT IS A RELIEF FOR US TO KNOW THAT THEY

OCUR IN THE PATH OF DUTY, AND THEREFORE ARE NOT AN OCCASION FOR SELF-CONDEMNATION.

If these Israelites had persisted in opposition to God's will in going by another route, of their own choosing, then the cup of their disappointment would have been embittered by what is far more distressing than unquenchable thirst—a lashing conscience. Painful disappointments are not agreeable; and those are particularly painful which cast suspicion upon the genuineness of our religious experiences or God's faithfulness. Our hearts ache for that ancient saint of God who, distressed in body and soul, lay upon the filthy pile vainly feeling after God and crying, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him" (Job 23. 8, 9). But the bitterness of this hour is sweetened by the consciousness of the fact that he had not sinned, and so he looks beyond his grief and comforts himself with: "But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined." How

different was his trouble from that of the erring apostle, who went out from Annas's palace upon the street, in the cool of the early dawn, and "wept bitterly"! Ah, Peter would just then have reckoned Job's trial a joy. That is a great utterance, drawn out of an instructive experience, which he wrote in after days: "Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

But our temptation is to suspect that these seasons of darkness come only of personal sin. Even when we are unable to trace it, we are very apt to think that somewhere hidden away in our heart is sin. And so we go mourning over a wrong that does not exist. I wish to say to you that that is a snare of the Evil One. To accuse yourself, saying, "I have sinned," when you cannot by the closest examination discover when or how, is to create a fiction in your mind which will make your religion a vague unreality. These people came to Marah not by unconscious disobedience but by God's leadership. If every time we come into trouble we regard it as a punishment for

some wrong, then Abraham must have been a bad man indeed when with a bleeding heart he laid his own son, the child of promise, on the altar; then Joseph must have been very wicked when he was carried away into Egypt; then Paul must have greatly sinned when he was cast into a Roman dungeon. What shall we say of the Holy One when God hid his face and in that hour of desolation, he cried, "Why hast thou forsaken me?"

Brothers, if the waters you try to drink are bitter, settle it first, have you strayed from the path of God's appointment? If not, then be courageous. Saints of God have been that way before you. Seemingly God has withdrawn, but as a matter of fact he never withdraws from us. No father ever followed the career of his son as our heavenly Father follows his. To interpret the bitter waters as an indication of God's displeasure is to misjudge him.

It is not so, but so it looks;
 And we lose courage then;
 And doubts will come if God hath kept
 His promises to men.

But right is right, since God is God;
 And right the day must win;
 To doubt would be disloyalty,
 To falter would be sin!

III. THESE EXPERIENCES, OCCURRING AS THEY DO IN THE LINE OF GOD'S LEADERSHIP, HAVE IN THEM A DIVINE PURPOSE.

Like those complaining hosts on the desert flats of Shur, we may not know just what that purpose is, but it is assuring for us to know that he *has* such a purpose. In looking back upon Israel's history we can readily understand why God led them by this hard way rather than by other routes which might have been selected. By any other way these unsoldierly tribes would have encountered hostile hordes of warlike people, who would have been more than a match for them unless their entire career was to be one continuous miraculous history, like the passage of the sea. And then their divine life would have been the power of God *without* them rather than a power *within* them. Holiness is not an external omnipotence sheltering us from harm, but the goodness of God identified with our very own. That is not a thing conferred but a thing achieved. It was God's purpose to make this nation of emancipated slaves a holy nation. That required discipline and law, and the road he led them was a part of the divine plan by which the moral brand which slavery had im-

printed on his people would be effaced. Furthermore, there were positive elements of character to be acquired which God himself could not confer by mere act of his will, such as self-respect, reverence for the majesty of law, a deep intuition of the superlative charm of the beauty of holiness. Unless action springs from personal character it is not liberty. The criminal is not free from his crime when the prison door is thrown open and he is told to go. A radical transformation of the man's own character must be wrought before he can come into the enjoyment of the blessings of liberty.

We know how many of the slaves of our own country were utterly unfit for liberty at the time of their liberation. They had such extravagant notions of freedom as to make that freedom a curse rather than a blessing. Multitudes of the blacks were brought into a slavery really worse than that which they had escaped. Before liberty became really a blessing they had to learn the meaning of industry, obedience, law.

The purpose of Christian trial is not merely to knock off the shackles from his wrists, but to fit his brow for a crown. It is to make of a slave of sin a sovereign of righteousness.

That requires time, patience, discipline, experience. John Newton has put in homely verse this truth, wrenched from out of his very soul:

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and every grace;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour
At once he'd answer my request,
And by his love's constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with his own hand he seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe,
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this?" I, trembling, cried.

"Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?"

"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,

"I answer prayer for grace and faith.

"These inward trials I employ

From self and pride to set thee free;

And break thy schemes of earthly joy

That thou mayest seek thy all in me."

And every step of our onward way, even though it be through hot sands and by Marah's disgusting springs, is laid by Him who knows the best route to royalty and the throne. Suppose we cannot explain why He leads us thus; our work is not to understand the way, but to walk it. "Secret things belong to God, but to us belong the things that are revealed." Is it not enough for us to know it *is* the way?

IV. THE BITTER WATERS WERE MADE SWEET.

These experiences are converted into blessings.

1. *They correct the extravagant conceptions we may have formed of the spiritual life.* What young Christian has ever formed a correct idea of what religion is, or its mode of development in actual life? It is usually ideal. Even before his conversion he thought he knew what a Christian ought to be, and never once thought that he would be like common professors. If, in addition to that fancy, he has had a magnificent conversion, like a walk through the divided waters of the sea, he will be very apt to take that as a type of his entire history. That is a mistake which is sure to lead him into serious perplexity in later days.

I frequently meet with persons who complain that they do not enjoy as much religion as they did when they were converted. They continue their prayer and work, but they cannot secure a return of those early happy days. I suppose that if our apple trees had souls they would talk in the same way. In the month of July they would say: "I do not enjoy as much religion as I used to. I can remember when great nature poured a flood of life into my heart and I felt it tingle to the tips of every twig. The birds came and sang in my arms. I could not restrain myself, but broke forth in joy of blossom that filled the air with the sweetness of my new life. O, I was so happy! But, alas! I have lost all that. I am going back. There is no blossom, no sweetness, no rapidly growing foliage. I have nothing but these drooping, dust-covered leaves and these green, hard, unpalatable apples."

But that tree is mistaken. It mistakes the luxuriance of May for the maturity of October. The July experience is better than that of May, though not so luxuriantly beautiful. It is a step onward toward the harvest. So I would forewarn all young Christians. Your peculiarly joyful experience will not continue. The blossoms will fall away and leave only

the green, hard fruit. And it is best that it should be so. Emotions must deepen into permanent conditions and habits of the soul. They must crystallize into principles which become concrete, and go back into character. Ideals must become performances.

The aim of the Christian life is to unfold the divinity that is in us, to make men like God; and that is not done by carrying them on soft bosoms, but by putting them to hardships. It is not the camp and dress parade that make veterans. War is the school of men that dispose of crowns. It is a happy thing for us if some bitter experiences dispel fanciful ideals, and give us more real conceptions of the Christian life. It does not consist in the main in singing joyful songs. A great part of it is working, enduring, fighting, obeying.

Must I be carried to the skies
 On flowery beds of ease,
 While others fought to win the prize,
 And sailed through bloody seas?

Sure I must fight, if I would reign;
 Increase my courage, Lord;
 I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
 Supported by thy word.

2. They are, furthermore, a blessing in that they, by the necessities of our thirst, drive us

to Christ. Whatever that tree that Moses found may have been, our tree is Christ. He sweetens all our bitter springs. If Marah's springs had been sweet, Israel would never have known the properties of that tree. If our experiences are satisfying, we are apt to rest in them and overlook Christ.

It is astonishing how many of us depend on our frames for our confidence. I recently asked three Christians what made them so sure that they were saved. One said, "I feel it here," laying his hand on his heart. Another said, "I had a very positive conversion." The third one said, "I love divine things." Not one replied, "Because Christ gave himself for me." And yet in that fact, and that fact alone, stands the surety of our salvation. Experience is good as corroborative. But experience never saves us. Christ, and Christ alone, is our Redeemer.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
 On Christ the solid Rock I stand;
 All other ground is sinking sand.

Paul was so sure of this fact as to speak in language most positive: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things

but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3. 7-9).

V. I will close with a single statement. JUST A HALF DAY'S JOURNEY FROM MARAH ARE THE PALM GROVES OF ELIM.

“And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water.” Twelve is the symbolic number for universality. There was all the water that was to be wished. “And threescore and ten palm trees.” Seventy means perfection upon perfection. Here were trees without number. Just a little beyond your bitter experiences are the living waters and the groves of delight.

VIII

MANNA

Deut. 8. 3: "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

ABOUT a month after their departure from Egypt the children of Israel, having consumed the provisions which they had brought with them, entered what is known as the wilderness of Zin, where they began to suffer the full privation of the desert. With no prospect of food they were on the point of starvation. "And the children of Israel said . . . Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. . . . We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away."

When they cried unto the Lord, he gave them manna. "And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. . . . And the manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium. And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil."

I. GOD'S PURPOSE IN GIVING ISRAEL MANNA WAS, AS MOSES STATED, SHORTLY BEFORE THE HOSTS WENT OVER INTO CANAAN, "THAT HE MIGHT MAKE THEE TO KNOW THAT MAN DOTHT NOT LIVE BY BREAD ONLY, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LORD, DOTHT MAN LIVE."

Let us try and understand that principle and then we can see the wisdom of the divine method of supplying Israel with food.

1. *Men do live by bread.* Our first conscious

want is for food. Deprive us of it and we suffer the pangs of hunger and, finally, death. And that need ramifies into all the phases of human life. It is said even to mark the progress of civilization. Bread and what it represents lie at the foundation of the great social questions of modern times. For bread men will toil and sacrifice and sometimes surrender honor and virtue. There are a few men who would rather starve and be free than to grow fat in slavery. But Israel was so fond of the life that is sustained by bread that when, in the freedom of the wilderness, they felt the pinches of hunger they longed for Egypt. Let us not be hasty in our condemnation. What man of us has not some time preferred his interests to his convictions, his ease to the sense of right, comfort to honor?

2. *But the bread life is not our only life.* There arise great wants within, a hunger of soul which is as imperative as that of the body.

When Israel was sighing for the fleshpots of Egypt they forgot that when they were at those pots, and feasting upon fish, cucumbers, onions, leeks, and garlic, then they were groaning for liberty. In the wilderness they were bread-hungry; in Egypt they were soul-hungry.

It is the universal consciousness that there is a life to be fed which is beyond that which bread supplies. The capacities we have of knowing, of loving, of enjoying, of being good or bad are all proofs to us that there is a life to be lived which is distinct from that which is bounded by the senses. Who of us has not in his degree had a consciousness of that higher life in one or more of its manifold phases? Some have had it in an intellectual way. They have seen some great truth bearing down upon them like a flood, but instead of overwhelming them it has carried them on its crest; and in the ecstasy of that experience they have cried, "This is the life to be preferred above all things else." The world is not wanting in men who deliberately choose knowledge in poverty to ignorance in luxury. Others have felt the deep life of nature, as when listening to the organ notes of the ocean under the stars, or the sweet pipings of the forests at night, or when, looking upon some landscape, heaven and earth have drawn so near that the one was filled with the rapture of the other, and the beholder has cried, like Fichte, "Thank God that I live." Many have had moments when they have felt the deep rapture of a holy love. As when in exquisite self-abandonment they

have cast themselves in the life of another and have known the might of that heavenly alchemy by which the twain were made one. As when Dr. Munger took his child on his knee and in the unutterable outgoing of his love, caught a glimpse of "how God loved, and saw how, loving so, he dwelt in infinite repose."

I shall not speak of the outreaching of the heart for those who have passed over the borders of our earth life, but that straining of the spirit often results in bringing visions of the unseen as realities to our consciousness—"bits of eternity unduly realized." These experiences may be only transient and we resume our common treadmill earth life, yet the memory of them is a constant affirmation that the common life is not our only life. "Man shall not live by bread alone." There is a life of truth, of right, of love, of virtue, compared with which this earth life is only existence.

3. *The supply of the soul's life* is "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Words! "Yes," says the scoffer, "give me bread when I am hungry; you may have words." But he does not know.

Words are not such empty things as they may seem, a breath wasted on the air. As

the pearly grains of manna contained substance that could be wrought into blood, bone, muscle, brain, and supply the waste of every part of the human frame, so words contain soul-nourishment. Why are immense libraries filled with—words? Why does the daily press groan in strenuous effort to pour out words, words, words? Why are the hours of school or church service so filled with—words? Why do you delight in having your friend pour from his own lips into your ear—words?

Words are things. Hear the memorable utterance of the Philosopher of Chelsea. "Cast forth thy word into the ever-living, ever-working universe; it is a seed grain that cannot die; unnoticed to-day, it will be found flourishing, perhaps as a banyan grove, perhaps also as a hemlock forest after a thousand years." A spoken word will fill the heart with gloom or illuminate a soul. That little girl's whole day was made miserable just by a fretful word spoken by her mother in the early hour. Forgotten by the mother, it irritated the heart of the child like a thistle. "Why did you not tell me that before?" said a dying mother to a great, burly son, who, bending over her while she was in death's shivers, said, "She

was a good mother." If he had only uttered those words when she was in the strife of a hard sacrifice of self for her family, it would have sandaled her feet and sweetened her pathway, and filled all her days with sunshine. Such is the power of words to breathe life or strike death. Words are the soul's sustenance. They are wrought into thoughts, inspirations, joys. They are the forces of life.

If so of words in general, what of the words that proceed out of the mouth of the Lord? They are *power*. God spoke to the formless void and lo! this beautiful world and the starry firmament. His word projected into darkness filled it with light. So his words, thrown into the soul, fill *it* with light and convert death into the beauteous forms of life. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

A fireman stood at the top of a ladder, leaning against a burning building, trying to press through a window from which poured thick volumes of black smoke. It was known that a child was perishing in the room. His courage was about failing when some one shouted, "Cheer him!" The crowd responded with mighty voice, "Hurrah! hurrah!" It rolled from the multitude like the sound of many

waters. But it was more than sounding words. It was the propulsive power of a great heart, the energy of a compelling will. It wrapped the fireman about with the protective cloak of a masterful courage and filled his soul with a purposeful will that carried him into the chamber of death, and brought him back again bearing in his arms the child—saved. Words are real forces. Even so do the words of God breathe the power of victorious cheer.

A weary soul was burdened down under intolerable woes which drove slumber from her eyelids, and dragged the passing moments of night slowly along till they seemed to stretch out into hours. She asked the Lord to give her a pillow on which she could rest her tired head. He only spoke to her: "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." The word became a pillow indeed. She listened as a sick child listens to the soft lullaby of its mother, and by the charm of its music she fell into sweet slumber. A wrecked

soul staggers on the brink of despair, when God speaks: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." He turns back into a new life—saved by a word.

An aged woman is dying in great distress of body when a daughter quietly reads a few words from the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. As she proceeds suddenly God himself speaks to the suffering one, and she herself takes up the utterance with the accent of mastery, "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." From that moment there is no moaning nor faltering for her. The words of God are the power of life even in the article of death.

His words are *truth*. Never yet has a "Thus saith the Lord" been proven false. But it is not simply that God's utterances are statements of facts that I mean when I say that they are truth. Our arithmetics and geographies are that. But his words are the statements of the profoundest facts of existence and of the universe. They reveal himself. This book is like the burning bush of Moses, from

which came the voice, "I AM THAT I AM . . . hath sent me unto you." And, like Moses, we cast off our sandals and prostrate ourselves before Jehovah. They give us visions down into the deeps of our own nature, and along the far vistas of God's eternities. Coleridge says, "In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."

Who of you, when you have sat by this well and talked with Him who converses with you there, have not felt like running to your towns people, saying, "Come, and I will show you him who hath told me all things whatsoever I did"?

God's words are *law*. All truths carry in them the element of authority. As soon as we know a thing to be true that moment we feel that we are under obligation to obey it. The man who lives below what he recognizes to be truth is just so far as he does so below the level of a man. The supreme authority is truth.

It is a very trite saying, "Obey and be

blessed." On the other hand, disobedience of the truth is so truly a violation of law as to bring certainty of penalty. "Drunkenness has its tyranny; dishonesty breeds suspicion and alienation; avarice carries its heart of ashes, folly its harvest of bewilderment; impiety stands on the border of life, nothing behind or before, and despair within; in the gleams of such hot flames we read the lesson of obedience." But on its positive side are love, joy, peace, prosperity, victory. This is what the words that proceed from out of the mouth of the Lord are—life, truth, law. And these are the very substance of the soul, the manna that feeds it.

It was this that God would teach these poor bread-lovers in the wilderness. He would have them learn to live in his words, that they might ultimately teach the world spiritual life. But he had to take them down on their own level, and by a disciplining process bring them up into a consciousness of their dependence on his word. He began with bread, first letting them hunger till they cried for food. Then, secondly, he made them gather it in little details, according to his prescribed rule. And, finally, he made their very physical necessities subserve his worship. Thus these

slaves learned day by day that they could live only by God's word.

II. THIS EVENT WAS MEANT TO PREFIGURE AND TYPIFY HIM IN WHOM THE SOUL'S WANT IS SATISFIED.

He himself says: "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." To feed on him is to believe in him; accept, understand, appropriate, assimilate and work him out in earnest experience. Feeding thus, the hunger of the soul is satisfied.

He said, "I am come that they might have life." Paul said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And these words are verified in the happy experience of millions since the apostolic days.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in thee I find.

There are several particulars of this rich supply of heaven-given food that are not without significance.

1. *One cannot know the reality of this divine feeding unless he hungers.* Not until the people hungered did the manna come.

2. *Every man had to gather for himself.* "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents."

3. *He gathered only what he needed.* When truth is learned with no purpose of using it save as a curiosity it turns to an offense. There is nothing that so fatally exhibits our divine religion, making it appear unreal, as does the frequent practice of exhibiting it in glowing speech and then making no earnest effort to live it. It becomes cant, a melting, foul-odored manna. "And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating."

4. *It must be gathered with regularity, with a single exception every day.* "And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the

morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted." A most fruitful cause of spiritual dyspepsia is this irregularity of feeding. If we treated our bodies the way many treat their deathless spirits, at times starving them, at other times overloading them, feeding them hurriedly and without any care as to the preparation or service of our food, we would soon become a gloomy, nervous, irritable, inane people, making life miserable for ourselves and others. Yet that is just what multitudes of manna-gatherers are doing. They do not enjoy their religion themselves and they make it disgusting to their children and neighbors.

5. *The one exception that God made to the daily gathering was not made with the purpose of teaching us that there is a time for the cessation of the daily rule of eating the bread of life, but to enjoin the rule of a special time for worship.* "And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that

which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein."

In addition to the daily bread, the soul of man needs a regular period set aside for the cultivation of those deeper elements of spiritual life which John summarizes in the expression, "our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." This deeper life demands the Sabbath, the day set aside for worship. Everything must be made to bend to the purpose of that day, else, in spite of the use of all things else, we will suffer a deplorable loss. Our spiritual life may be beautiful and even brilliant in Bible study, works of benevolence, and the finest ethical culture, but by the neglect of the devotional hour and the devotional day it will be like that curious plant which at this time is becoming so popular among us, the poinsettia. Its beauty is in the leaf, while the flower is itself a mean little thing, of no beauty whatever. The aim of the entire spiritual life is to be clothed with

the beauty of holiness. That is our consummate flower. If it be only a mean, shapeless, colorless thing, we have missed the purpose of our being. The brilliant scarlet of the leaves that have gathered about the flower may deceive ourselves and others, but it will not deceive Him who condemned the beautiful fig tree which grew "nothing but leaves."

IX

REPHIDIM

Exod. 17. 8, 9: "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand."

WE have now come to an event in Israel's pilgrimage which is full of interest both in its historic facts and in its spiritual meanings, namely, their battle with the Amalekites in Rephidim. We will study the battlefield, the enemy, the fight, and the victory.

I. THE BATTLEFIELD WAS REPHIDIM.

There is no certainty as to the identity of the place; and while our explorers and Bible scholars hold such widely diverging opinions, I would not be so immodest as to dogmatically decide in favor of any particular one. But the spiritual Rephidim where we have our encounter with the Amalekites is a known certainty. And as its characteristic features correspond so closely with the place which the English explorers affirm is the historic Reph-

idim, and which the celebrated German Egyptologist, George Ebers, supports, I am for the present content to rest in their view. The ancient place photographs with wonderful exactness the modern with which we are so familiar.

They identify it with what is now known as the Wady Feiran, a deep valley leading from the wilderness of Zin eastward toward Mount Sinai. It is supposed to be the bed of an ancient river, and lies between bare and precipitous rocks that climb hundreds and in some instances thousands of feet up toward the sky. For the most part it is stripped of verdure, with not a fern nor a spear of grass to hide the nakedness of the rocks or the vast waste of sand. But the scenery there is described as the most magnificent of the Sinaitic peninsula.

Dean Stanley says, "I have looked upon scenery as strange, and on scenery more grand, but on scenery at once so strange and so grand I never have looked upon, and probably never will again." He also says, "The portentous appearances are exactly such as to give the impression that you are indeed in the center of the very forces of creative energy." The mountains there show the greatest contrasts

of color. They are streaked from head to foot as with boiling streams of dark-red matter poured over the vast heaps of seemingly calcined mountains, the detritus of iron in the sandstone foundation, the traces of igneous action on the granite rocks, dating from their first upheaval (Clarke). Above them all tower the Gothic spires of Mount Serbal, seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, looking wonderfully like a cathedral of God's own creation.

But desolate as the wady is in the main, in many of the lateral ravines there are fountains of cool water which flow down for a little way and then disappear in the sand. Along these singing streams plants drink life and the birds make their nests and warble their glad songs. These are delightful spots, and all the more so because of the contrast with the vast waste of hot and verdureless sand on every hand. In one part of this valley is a beautiful oasis, created by a river fed by many of these lateral streams, which flows at least a mile before it sinks away in the sand of the desert. That portion of the valley has been called "The Paradise of the Bedawin." The Arabs call it "the gem of the desert." The course of the stream is fringed with palms

and tamarisks and fruit trees, with patches of wheat and melons. There are ferns and flowers. There the air is sweet with the rippling waters and the twittering of birds. Is it any wonder that they called the land "Rephidim," which is a word meaning "places of rest"?

Moses doubtless knew of these resting places and so brought the hosts of Israel there. But, alas! the inhabitants of the wilderness, the Amalekites, had assembled there in force and held the oases. The people could not get access to the water and were on the point of perishing with thirst, and certainly would had not water been miraculously supplied. It was there that Moses struck the rocks and the streams gushed forth. But in order to continue their journey the Israelites were compelled to give battle to their tormenting foes. Instead of rest Israel had war.

True to the facts of spiritual life is this description of Israel at Rephidim. Lurking there are armed enemies which we must overcome before we can enjoy the places of rest. This fact has often been misunderstood. So common is this experience that many have come to almost dread periods of unusual joy. Even Isaac Watts has sung:

The brightest things below the sky
Give but a flattering light.
We should suspect some danger nigh
When we possess delight.

I once heard one in the sweet enjoyment of an innocent and even elevating pleasure, murmur the usual dread with "What trouble am I to suffer to balance this joy?" Many of our Puritan brethren have seemed to think that joy was really wicked, especially if the joy is not of the more serious kind and closely identified with worship, as if to be good one must be miserable; as though the heavenly flowers bloomed brightest in the shadow.

That is certainly a wrong interpretation of the fact. It was God himself who led Israel to Rephidim, and purposed that ultimately they should enjoy the goodly land. The divine life was not meant to lead us in dreary places. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." How the Psalms fairly bubble over with outgushing joy like the babbling streams from out of the colored rocks of Rephidim. Did not God at the close of this pilgrimage distinctly promise the people of obedience the largest blessing?

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt harken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and

blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto: and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

If that is the spirit of the Old Testament, it is even more so of the New. Though Jesus, for reasons of the law of atonement, was the bearer of our sorrows, he was the happiest Man in the world. He gave us himself and his truth, "that his joy might be in us, and that our joy might be full." The apostle exhorts

us to "rejoice," and to "rejoice always." There is no class of people in the world living in such sweet content and such victorious hopefulness as the genuine Christian. The music of the gospel is keyed to that of the angelic chorus. It is "glad tidings."

Nevertheless, it is a fact that undisturbed joy is not favorable to the highest advancement. It is well for us that our Rephidim becomes to us a place of battle; else, settling down at ease, we will have no desire for Canaan, nor capacity for enjoying it in case of occupation. It is a feature of God's providence that he uses our enemies to enlarge our happiness. While they think evil God means it for good.

I am not now forcing a spiritual interpretation upon the history. Moses himself when about to take farewell of his people, just before crossing the Jordan, reviewed the history of the wilderness journey in one of the most sublime songs that the singing Hebrew people ever produced. There he uses a familiar illustration, which appeals mightily to every sensitive heart: "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up

her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him and there was no strange god with him." The habit of the eagle is thus described:

The eagle has a peculiar affection for its young, and is said to manifest it in a most unusual manner. When she thinks them strong enough for flight she disturbs their nest, with the view of making it so uncomfortable for them that they must leave it; then she flutters over them to encourage them to attempt to fly and to show them how to do it; and if every other method fails, it is alleged that she spreads her wings, and taking her offspring on them, soars with them aloft; then gliding swiftly from beneath them, she leaves them for the moment to their own resources. But if they should be unable to bear themselves up, she darts beneath them again with incredible swiftness, and receiving them once more upon her wings she prevents their fall, and brings them back again to the rocky ledge whereon the nest was built.

Thus God deals with us. The nest is soft, and we are wanting in courage. Some providence breaks it up and we flutter out in great trepidation, wondering why our Father treats us thus, when lo! we fly.

Our external life is so wrought into our internal that great outward changes are usually marked by corresponding inward ones. Many a Jacob has come down from his midnight struggle a transformed man. A timid

people come from out of Rephidim's hard fight, brave and ambitious for the final battle which would give them the land that is theirs.

II. LET US NOW STUDY THE ENEMY WE ENCOUNTER IN THE PLACES OF SPIRITUAL REST, THE AMALEKITES.

These people hold a very peculiar place in Bible history. They were descendants of Esau, twin brother of Jacob. Jacob's line represents the spiritual race, Esau's the carnal. Esau was the flesh man, who would sell his divine heritage, when he was hungry, for something to eat. He was the hairy hunter who never could have endured the privation and discipline necessary to know and love the Invisible. Amalek was the grandson of Esau and without doubt represented his coarse flesh nature. He was the natural enemy of the divine in man and he stands out in history as the type of the flesh. The Amalekites seem to have been inspired peculiarly with a hatred of Jehovah—"They feared not God." Amalek differed from Pharaoh in this: Pharaoh represented the world power and hated everything, including God, that stood in the way of that power; Amalek hated God as God. He would go out of his way just to strike a blow

at him. "His hand was against the throne of the Almighty." Pharaoh, on the other hand, would never trouble himself about Jehovah if he would only keep out of his way.

In this instance the Amalekites came out of their own territory for the express purpose of destroying God's people for no other reason than that they were God's people. Hence the awful curse that God put upon that race: "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." While all other nations could become proselytes, and so share in the privileges of the children of God, that was never to be allowed the Amalekites. God forbade their ever being permitted into the congregation of Israel.

Can there be any doubt as to who are our Amalekites? It is this flesh of ours, the "old man," the "carnal mind" (Rom. 6. 6; 8. 7; Gal. 5. 17). We have other enemies, but here in our flesh are our Amalekites, in these unruly appetites, in our love of ease, our passion of temper and all disposition to excess. Here is the foe whose hand is laid on the throne of the Almighty, against whom God swears an endless war. Would you have their individual names? here they are: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery,

fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

These are the foes that beset the Christian. I emphasize this fact. The *Christian* encounters these minions of Satan in his own flesh. For us to suppose that when God has pardoned us and has broken the chains that have hitherto bound us, then the conflict is over, is for us to utterly misapprehend the character of the Christian life. In point of fact that is the time that the conflict really begins. Regeneration is not the renewing of the old nature. It simply brings into conscious being the new man. Then this new nature rises in antagonism to the old. Its work now is to subdue the old. We are sons of God not because we have mastered the flesh, but we master the flesh because we *are* sons. It is the Holy Ghost that begets us, making us new men in Christ Jesus. Now, because of that supernatural fact, we are to live like sons. Hear John: "Beloved, now are we the sons of

God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Hear Paul: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. . . . Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

It is well for us to clearly understand this relationship of our sonship to a holy life. Do not think that you are unsaved, because the Amalekites arise in Rephidim. That battle-field lies on the way to the glory land. Hold fast to your assurance while you enter courageously into the fight for mastery. "Keep under your body and bring it into subjection."

III. AS TO THE FIGHT AND THE VICTORY but two things need to be said.

1. *Israel must do his own battling.* Here-

tofore God fought *for* his people, as when they were shut in the impassable defile on the western bank of the sea. Moses then assured the frightened hosts, "The Lord will fight for you: and ye shall hold your peace." But now the command is, "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek." As Mackintosh so admirably states it: "God now fights *in* Israel as before he fought *for* them. And there is just that difference between Christ's battles for us and the Holy Ghost's battles in us."

Let us remember this, my brother: the great fight by which you were redeemed was finished long ago. He that came from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah did it all. He trod the winepress alone. It was by his shed blood, not ours, that we were saved. His death cry was, "It is finished." That is, the redemption work was done in that hour. Let no doubt linger in your heart as to your salvation. That stands in the cross. Whatever enemies may confront you, the fight is not the decisive one of your spiritual history. The most momentous, the critical, and the supremely victorious one was that which He won for us. Hold fast to that. Sing it out in every after conflict: "I'm redeemed. I'm redeemed." But these hateful Amalekites lurk in Rephidim;

and it is there that *we* must take the weapons of war and win our victories.

2. *The battle is won by prayer and the sword.* While Moses stood on the hill, with his outstretched arms upheld by the aid of Aaron and Hur, Joshua led the fighting men into bloody battle. When Moses's arms dropped the battle went against Israel, as though the issue lay altogether with God. But if the Israelites had ceased to fight the battle would have been lost. And so it seemed as though the issue was all with the fighters. But the victory lay in both the sword and prayer. In order to effective prayer we must cooperate with God in the thing we ask. Having asked a given thing, proceed at once to keep step with God's movement toward that end. Do we ask a house of worship? Then lay down the offerings and hasten to erect it. Do we pray for the salvation of souls? Then go with our testimony and God's invitation. Do we petition God to clothe and feed the poor? Then take them garments and food. Do we implore heaven to break the power of the saloon in our community? Then let us gird ourselves for organization, arguments, and votes for its suppression.

This is not doing what we could do without

prayer. It is our prayer that brings us in companionship with God in our work, fills us with his cheer and strength and assurance. Moreover, when we thus work with him his own power enlarges, intensifies, and supplements ours. Working thus with him all things are possible.

We read in a recent magazine a conversation between a parishioner and his pastor. The layman said, "If I could have you with me all the time, it would be easy for me to live a saintly life." "Yes," replied the pastor, "if I could crawl in you and put my head in your head, and my heart in your heart, and my hands in your hands, then you might be quite like me." Yet that is just what the Holy Spirit proposes to do for us. He knocks at the door of our hearts, asking, "Let me in." When he enters he illumines, cleanses, empowers. And we move out in our sphere possessed of a heavenly presence which nothing can withstand. Every fleshly lust is cut down before our triumphant advance.

A brother minister told me the other day of a popular singer who could produce another's music with exquisite grace, but who had no creative power of his own. He, however, had discovered a new *theme* which he could pro-

duce in brief on his instrument, but was unable to give it body, breadth, life, and power. On one occasion he was telling a composer of great fame of what he had, and of his inability to make it a living thing, when the master musician said to him, "Take your seat at the piano and give me your theme." While he was playing the great composer slipped his fingers under the hands of the player, and, taking his idea, covered it with form and beauty. Then, asking him to return again to the instrument, withdrew his own hands, leaving the weaker spirit inspired with the masterful genius. A miracle was wrought. His theme which a little while before had such a thin and feeble utterance now sounded forth with clash of cymbal and blare of trumpet and shout of a great multitude.

Thus when we put our idea to God in prayer, he slips his hands under ours and clothes our littleness with his own majesty and glory. His and ours are blended in one glorious product in which we cannot discriminate and say, "This is mine and that is thine." It seems that it is all God's, and yet it is all ours.

X

THE ELECT NATION

Exod. 19. 5, 6: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

I AM to speak to you to-day of a most singular people—the most richly gifted of all the sons of men—a people whose history is as musical as poetry and as thrilling as romance—and which has, above all others, exerted the most powerful influence on the destiny of the human race—I mean the Jew. In the text quoted God states his own idea and purpose concerning this people. My purpose is to study this divine estimate in the light of the after history of the elect nation. In order to put the mass of material we have collected in some analytic form, I will just take the four statements of this text and consider them separately:

I. "YE SHALL BE A PECULIAR TREASURE UNTO ME, ABOVE ALL PEOPLE."

1. *This word "peculiar," in the Hebrew, has*

two meanings. The minor meaning is the same as our major—"unlike all others"; but its chief meaning, which the English expresses only very remotely, is "one's own." What God affirms is that Israel shall be specially separated from all other people, and be his favorites. Hence the word "treasure" is added: "A peculiar treasure." It is no mean privilege to be able to look up in the heavens and say, "Thou art my God"; but who can measure the immensity of the privilege of having him look down upon us and say, "Ye are mine"? That was Israel's joy. "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee" (Deut. 7. 6). Israel was the elect people. I do not wish to thrust the troublesome theme of election upon your thought at this time, but here it is; and I must say a few things about it, so far as it relates to Israel. "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth." God's choices are elections.

It is plain that in the general movements of history God does elect individuals and nations to fill its chief places. We have seen how Moses was called to the specific task of leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan. God is reported to have said of Pharaoh, "For this cause have I raised thee up" (Exod. 9. 16). So Cyrus

was elected to restore the kingdom of Israel and Paul was elected to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Just as a builder with his plans before him chooses his materials from every quarter of the globe, and fashions them to serve his particular purpose, and then adjusts each to each till the temple stands complete, so God, having from the depths of his eternity completed his plan, employs human actions as so many factors in its execution. No people were ever elected to a higher place in the kingdom of God than Israel. They were especially God's representatives in the world and as such admitted to the most eminent privileges. They were selected as the custodians of divine truth, the trustees of God for humanity.

2. *That this people are peculiar in their election* is seen in this simple fact of tremendous significance. *The Jew exists.* Here he is before your very eyes, living in your midst, yet as distinct as the oak is from the chestnut or the beech. And go where you will, that fact confronts you. In England, Germany, Italy, Africa, China, Turkistan, there is this man cleanly marked an unmistakable Jew. Tramp the world over, and wherever there breathes the faintest breath of civilization you find him. And if you tramp the ages, you will

make the same discovery. Go back to the early beginning of our national existence, and there is the Jew with his pack. O'erleap the centuries and walk the age of the Plantagenets, and there you find the beautiful Rebecca and her miserly father. Go farther back to the frontiers of history, in the life of those cities which, like Nineveh and Babylon, have been sepulchered in the dust of millenniums, and there is the omnipresent Jew. The monuments of Egyptian civilization tell of this strange race, which is at home in every age, as in every land. Truly, it can be affirmed of the Jew as of no other people, that he exists. There was a deep significance in that statement which Judah P. Benjamin made in reply to a brother senator, who made a sneering allusion to his Jewish origin. "Mr. Chairman and Senators, as to the allusion of the senator to my origin, I have only to say that when his ancestors were savages mine were the princes of the earth."

Such has been the persistent and exhaustless vitality of the Jew that he has been likened to the burning bush, burning but not consumed. I add without irreverence, that from this acacia ablaze, issues a voice crying, "I AM THAT I AM hath sent me unto you." I am not surprised that this persistent being of the Jew

has been called *a miracle of history*. I pronounce it a miracle, because he continues to live in spite of every natural reason why he should not live. Notice a few facts:

(1) He has no country. We know how national character is largely made by geography. Character, like plants, assimilates the soil. Climate chooses its men as it does its fruits. Emigrants in a few generations lose their distinctive features and mingle their life in that of their adopted country. The white waters of the Aar might as well attempt to resist the green waters of the Rhone as they travel together to the sea as for a people to attempt to preserve their distinctive characteristic features without a country. Israel has done it. Ever since Titus shook them out of their ancient dwelling places they have been homeless wanderers. But they are the same people they were when David was their king. No historic people has held its national features so long or so well as this. The Aar in this instance does travel the whole length of the Rhone without mingling its waters. We absorb other nations, but we cannot absorb Israel.

(2) They have no living speech peculiarly their own. They speak the tongue of the

country where they chance to live. Language makes and preserves character. An Englishman in a foreign land can preserve his nationality by simply speaking and reading his native tongue. Language is so inwrought into character that to destroy it is like cutting off the roots of a tree. The tree is doomed. But here, against this law, a people with no distinctive speech preserves its national vitality unimpaired.

(3) Another thing: they exist in spite of every effort to exterminate them. They have been oppressed, persecuted, butchered. Never has a people suffered like these. With but a tithe of their afflictions other nations have disappeared altogether from the earth. Kings have issued edicts and commissioned executions against them. Every man has been their enemy and hurled every indignity against them. Let me quote a few of the familiar details from the story of their wrongs:

Adrian slew five hundred and eighty thousand in battle. Constantine regarded them as "the most hateful of all nations," and after having suppressed one of their revolts, he commanded their ears to be cut off, and then dispersed them as vagabonds, throughout the different countries. They were forbidden under penalty of death to approach within three miles of Jerusalem. Justinian destroyed all their synagogues and abolished

their public worship. The Triumphal Arch at Rome, and the Coliseum, built by them as slaves, within whose walls they were the first victims slain, bespeak alike their early bondage and misfortunes. The Mohammedans lifted up a cruel hand against them. They were sold as slaves, massacred or banished, till not a free Jew was to be found in Arabia. The poor pillaged them; the clergy denounced them; the rich repudiated their loans; the monarchs gained the right of entire confiscation. Every passion in every grade of society was let loose upon them. In places, as even now in Russia, they are compelled to wear a distinctive garb, bespeaking their dishonor. Until recently, wherever permitted to reside, they have been for the most part cooped up in Jewries, Ghettos, Judengassen, subjected to ignominious and hurtful restrictions, and limited by law in their natural increase. In France every Jew who passed through a public gate or crossed a bridge was coerced into the payment of the same toll as that levied upon a donkey. In most countries they were inhibited from owning land, were excluded from universities and schools, from every honorable and useful profession and law.

In conversation with a Jewish lawyer of great ability he startled me by saying: "You ask me when I expect the Messiah? He has come. He is right before you, in my people. Your Christ is only a mere fragment of the sublime whole. My race is the Messiah. He gives to you your God, your divine truth, your salvation. But you despise and reject him. You crucify your Saviour—yet he lives. You lay him in his sepulcher, but the miracle

of his resurrection is ever before you." The efforts of the centuries to exterminate the Jew are an utter failure.

(4) Another potent factor in changing a race is the mere lapse of time. Time ages all things. It transforms nations as it does individuals, but it has failed to change Israel. Where is the ancient Persian, the Assyrian, the Egyptian? Where is the Greek, the Roman, the Hun? Where is the Englishman of Chaucer's day? Where is the typical Yankee of fifty years ago? We cannot resist the alterations of the years on personal type. But the son of Abraham stands apart, unshaken by the mutations of earth's history. Wherever or whenever you find him, he is the Jew.

(5) We might name a fifth thing which makes the existence of the Jew a marvel. The very presence of a dominant race will eventually exterminate a feebler type. The advance of the civilized race in America has driven the native race off to the frontier. The breath of the white man is death to the red man. In spite of every effort of the English to preserve the natives of the subjugated islands of the Pacific, they are rapidly decreasing. But no dominant race can, by its presence, outroot

Israel. He lives. And when we lay this fact by the side of the distinct prophecies, uttered thousands of years ago, that this should be so, we cannot but regard the very existence of the Jews as a continuous miracle of history. Their history is unexplainable by any natural methods. That was a wise reply which the German clergyman made to the inquiry of Frederick the Great for the best argument in proof of the truth of Bible history. He answered, "Your Majesty, the Jews."

II. The second thing affirmed of the Jews by God in the passage I have read is that he is chosen for the purpose of giving to the world RELIGION.

"Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, an holy nation." A priest is one who ministers in sacred things. Strictly speaking, he is a mediator between God and man. That was Israel's call—to be a sovereign priesthood. When God chose Israel to be priests he endowed them with the gifts for the great work of giving religion to men. It is a singular fact that, notwithstanding Israel's frequent backslidings, no people is so generously gifted for the divine as the Jew. It is often remarked that every people is endowed for some par-

ticular work. The Phœnicians were gifted for industry and commerce, the Greeks for science and art, the Romans for law and politics, Israel for religion. He was not lacking in other gifts, but his dominant qualification was "the organ for the divine, the intuition of holiness." He was peculiarly called to be *the salvation people*. Notice Israel's endowments for the priesthood:

1. *Intellectual*. I am persuaded that no people has a finer intellectual capacity than the Jew. Notice *their literature*. Long before the blind bard sang the great Greek epic the Hebrew had produced a superior. With an equal stateliness of movement it surpasses the Iliad by measureless heights in the grandeur of its thought. What lyrics can compare with those of David in voicing out the deepest sentiments of the innermost heart? Where will you find a more exquisite finish of artistic verse than in the songs of the sons of Korah? What ballads are sweeter than those pilgrim songs, known as "the songs of degrees"? Where will you find profounder wisdom than in the Hebrew proverbs? Where is there in all literature a better specimen of logical reasoning than the Epistle to Romans?

Do you ask as to their intellectual status

in modern times? You must bear in mind that less than one hundred years ago the schools of most of the European states were closed against them. It would be a miracle if the Jews should have emerged from their oppression with any brains at all. What would you say of the African race if, after its centuries of slavery, it should *at once* take the foremost place among the scholars and artists of the world? Yet such has Israel done. Let me give you a few suggestive facts which I have collected from the most reliable sources, but which I will not pause to name.

Before the darkness of the Middle Ages was fairly gone the Jew, in spite of all his disadvantages, was foremost among scholarly men. Among the most famous I name Menahem ben Seruk (died 970), author of a biblical dictionary; Jehudah Ibn Chajug (in Arabic, Aboulwalid), the chief of Hebrew grammarians (about 1050); Ibn Ganach (died 1050), the grammarian; Ibn Gabirol (the Avicbron among schoolmen), philosopher, grammarian, and commentator (died 1070); Ibn Pakuda, the moralist (1050-1100); Ibn Giath, the cosmographer, astronomer, and philosopher; Ibn Gikatilla, the grammarian (1070-1100); Moses ibn Ezra, the hymnist

(died 1139); Jehuda Ha-Levi, the philosopher and poet (died 1141); Ibn Daud, the historian (died 1180); Abraham ibn Ezra, commentator, philosopher, and poet (died 1167), whom Luther used to translate the Hebrew Bible; Benjamin Tudela, the traveler; Jehuda Tibbon, the prince of translators (died 1190); Isaac Alfasi (died 1089); Moses Maimonides, the greatest of all mediæval rabbis (died 1204).

In 1879 Herr Stocker, of Berlin, stated that in the Gymnasia of that city the Jews, who were but five per cent of the population, were thirty per cent of the students. Still later, out of 3,609 students in the university of that city, 1,302 were Jews. In Austria and Hungary the state of affairs is still more astonishing. Professor Treitschke calculated that while in the population of the German Empire the proportion of the Jews is as one to seventy-five, in all the higher institutions of learning it is as one to ten. It is stated that at the head of the largest theological college in the world—that of Cairo in Egypt—is a Jewish pervert to Islam named Abbasi. Over this Mohammedan university, with its three hundred professors and ten thousand students, his authority is reported to be supreme.

In every department of learning the Jew

holds the very highest rank. I name as specimens of Jewish Christian scholars: Neander, Delitzsch, and Edersheim; of antichristian biblical critics: Zunz and Kalisch; of linguists: the Sanscrit scholars, Goldstucker and Benfey; of Hebraists: Luzzatto and Fuerst; of philologists: Frank and Ibn Balaam; of historians: Jost, Geiger, and Gratz; of musical composers: Meyerbeer, Rossini, and Strakosch; Stoddard is authority for adding Mozart and Beethoven; of poets: Heine and Jehuda Alcharizi, the Horace of Jewish poetry in Spain; of philosophers: Moses Mendelsohn, and Spinoza.

All this leads me to believe what I was told in Vienna in 1873, but what I have not been able to verify, that at that time a company of anatomists and phrenologists had collected some thousand or more skulls, selected from the best types from all over the world, and submitted them to the examination of a committee made up of persons who could not know the nationality of the skulls. This committee was to select the ten best types, and hand them over to the company, when their origin was to be revealed. It turned out that every skull was that of a Jew. This, of course, *proves* nothing. But the inference is that the best

heads are on the shoulders of God's elect people.

2. *Moral sense.* But the chief endowment of a priest is the moral rather than the intellectual element. He must have the organ for the divine—that inward sense, by which a man sees and knows God. There is no people so richly endowed in that respect as the Jew. You can see it in the face of the best specimens. There is in the very physiognomy of the choice specimens of the Jewish stock the mark of divinity. Dr. Guthrie says:

The anatomist pronounces the ideal head to be the Jew's. Take it all in all, it is the best in the world, visibly superior to that of the Greeks and that of the Romans, and also that of those Teutonic races that in modern times have marched at the head of civilization. The star of Abraham is in the ascendant here.

I hardly dare to speak of the spiritual beauty of the noblest of the Hebrew race, lest I should seem to exaggerate. We are so familiar with the hard and selfish side of the Jew's life as to really question whether there be any other side. His very face to many is a symbol of the dollar, and they can hardly look upon him without feeling that every part of his personality is covetously crying, "Gif me your thaler!" Still we cannot but be impressed with the matchless beauty of the

best of the race. In all art centers, as Florence and Rome, the Jewish models are at a premium. Joseph Cook, in his remarkable lecture on "Solar Light," by which he means that peculiar illumination of countenance which we designate as divine, says:

When I stood once in the Jewish Wailing Place in Jerusalem and contrasted the pure blood of the Jew with the coarse blood of the Arab, I had before me, on the one hand, countenances singularly capable of illumination, and, on the other, countenances singularly incapable of it. There are not a few children from some of the best Jewish families on the earth sent to Jerusalem for education, and pure in blood, and, as I was compelled to think, of finer grain than the Italians and the Greeks of the Forum and the Acropolis. But, I said, "You have forgotten the English; you have forgotten the Americans"; and, as my thoughts were taking that posture there came into the brown, crowded square two children in English dress and began to converse with the Jewish children. I said: "These are sons of rough men, probably; they do not represent the English or American fineness." They were superior in animal force, but plainly inferior in capacity for the solar look to the Jewish boys with whom they conversed, face to face. I asked to whom the outrivaled children belonged, and found they were sons of one of the most cultured men, indeed, of one of the missionaries in the Holy City. The Arab, however, was the greater contrast—opaque, repulsive, and showing an imperviousness to light, in his countenance, while, in the best specimens, the Jew shone from behind his physical integument at times like a light behind thin, translucent marble.

There is in the Jewish people even now an essential affinity for the kingdom of God. To use Paul's own figure, other nations in God are like the wild olive grafted on the domestic vine. Israel is like a stock grafted on its own kind. However irreligious he may be, there is still in him, as perhaps in no other people, that inborn affinity of nature for the divine, which may make him stand out in contrast with all others as "the holy nation."

III. Another endowment of the elect people is GENIUS OF IMPERIALISM: "Ye shall be a *kingdom* of priests." The Septuagint translates the phrase "a priesthood of kings." Peter, quoting the same and applying it to the Christian Church, calls it "a royal priesthood." John, addressing the churches, says, "He has made us kings and priests unto God." Israel was elected to be a nation of kings. They had conferred on them the endowment of royalty. Hence God would appoint no king over them, for they were all to be kings. That, I imagine, is what he meant when he called himself "King of kings"—not merely that he is King over such men as Nimrod and Pharaoh, but more especially that he is King of Israel, every man of whom is a king. So what angered

him when Israel clamored for a king was not that they should prefer a human sovereign to him, but that they should disown their own royalty and consent to be subjects. He meant that every individual should have the endowments of sovereignty, such as "commanding, judging, defending, punishing, and rewarding." And they were ultimately to be to the world in point of government what they were destined to be in point of religion: "Kings shall come to the light of thy rising," etc.

Do we find the genius of sovereignty in the Jew now in their dispersion as we thought we found the genius of religion in their wickedness? We do. Under the guise of servitude it is thought by many that the sovereign of Christendom to-day is the Jew. It is not always the one who holds the scepter or wears the crown that really reigns. The King of England is sovereign only in name. Parliament rules. Bismarck wore no crown while he governed Germany. It was with the hope of dominion that Israel started out in history, and he has never abandoned it. He believes that his mission is to govern. Even when enslaved and under the burden of an oppression of centuries, his spirit did not break. He carried the heart of a king. He emerged

from his long persecution not, as one would suppose, a race of idiots, but a race of princes.

I could devote an hour to a review of historic facts which would astonish those who have not examined the place the Jew has held in the councils of state. It has been truthfully affirmed that in practical politics the modern Jew displays as brilliant genius as in literature and finance. Beaconsfield in Great Britain, Lasker in Germany, Gambetta in France, Malvano in Italy, and Judah P. Benjamin in our own country, to say nothing of crowds of minor notabilities, recall the remark of M. de La Veleye, the Belgian publicist, that "if this upward movement continues, the Israelites, a century hence, will be the masters of Europe." Valbert says:

The German Jews form an insignificant minority in Germany, yet already predominate in municipal councils of the largest cities of Prussia. The place they occupy at the bar, in the universities, in all the liberal professions is entirely disproportionate to their numbers. As soon as the doors of Parliament were opened to them they distinguished themselves in it.

England's greatest equity lawyer was George Jessel—a Jew. "In the Italian Parliament there are three or four more Jewish deputies than there ought to be, in proportion to their numbers, a certain proof that they succeed by

their talent," so says La Veleye. In Spain, Samuel La Najid (1855) was nominally prime minister, but really dictator of Grenada. The third person present with the emperor of Germany and the president of the French republic when they arranged the plan of peace after their great war was M. de Rothschild.

In the armies and navies of civilization their distinction relatively to numbers is equally pronounced. Who does not know of Napoleon's brilliant general, Massena, whose real name was Manasseh? But not all know that he was a Jew. Russia has reverted to ancient and mediæval atrocities against the Jews. Notwithstanding this, members of their race have been, and now are, prominent in the administration of that colossal empire. Fould, Cremieux, and Goudchaux in France, Jacobi in Prussia, Fischof in Austria, and Freund (Mahmud Pasha) in Turkey are named as leading and ruling in the forefront of aggression upon their former oppressors.

But, as I have said, the Jew is too deep to care much for the *name* of power; he wants its reality. "You may have the feathers; give me the *bird*." Hence he seeks not the crown but the regnant forces of the day. What are they?

1. I am sure that no one will dissent to this: *One of the most potent forces of our day is money.* There is nothing to which the government is so sensitive as commerce. The chief thought of legislation is the development of the nation's wealth. It is the controlling spirit of society. Mammon dictates fashion and measures manhood. In the apostle's day it offered gold for the Holy Ghost. It is charged that our day accepts the offer. Money rules. But who is the man that holds the scepter in that realm? Peculiarly the Jew. Let me read you a few facts from the pen of Dr. Whateley:

Isaiah (60. 9) said that Israel would bring their gold and silver with them. They do indeed "eat the riches of the Gentiles" (Isa. 61. 6). Their financiers hold the sinews of war, and by their instrumentality powerfully influence, if they do not control, the political and war-like movements of Europe. During the ten years 1854 to 1864, wrote the Rev. E. O. Bartlett, "the Rothschilds furnished [from their own resources and the avails of popular subscriptions] \$200,000,000 to England, \$50,000,000 to Austria, \$40,000,000 to Prussia, \$130,000,000 to France, \$50,000,000 to Russia, \$12,000,000 to Brazil; in all, \$482,000,000, besides many millions to smaller states." German "anti-Semites" complain that "capital is concentrated in Jewish hands." The liquor trade and usury also are in many districts concentrated in their hands. So is the real estate, through foreclosure of mortgage, often given for liquor debts. One fourth of the Russian railways are owned by the Jewish "railroad king," M. Samuel Solomonowitz de Poliakoff, who is also one of

the principal scientific and educational benefactors of the empire. In 1871 about six sevenths of all the bankers in Prussia were Jews, and in 1880 the *Neue Evang. Kirchen-Zeitung*, of Berlin, asserted that "the Bourse of Vienna actually lies wholly in Jewish hands." In Hungary, Roumania, and Servia they bid fair to oust all the peasantry, and to possess themselves of the entire soil. In France it is affirmed by M. Drumont that "all comes from the Jew, and all returns to the Jew again." The railway system is, to a very great extent, under his control. In Algiers also the Jews absorb nearly all the products of human activity. In the United States of America, and especially in the great commercial metropolis of New York, the number of Jews has enormously increased. In the city it has swelled from about 60,000 in 1880 to about 200,000 in 1890. Many millions of Jewish capital are invested in wholesale trade, of which a very large percentage is under control of the owners. Jobbers and retailers, bankers and brokers of the same blood are numerous, immensely wealthy, and exceedingly influential. Similar facts are reported of Chicago, San Francisco, and other cities. In the wholesale liquor business the Jew is conspicuous; and in the retail trade is by no means unknown. Everywhere the bulkiest element in the plutocracy, relative to the nationalities that compose it, is the Hebrew.

2. Another spirit of our day is *deistic philosophy*, or, as it is better known, *modern liberalism*. I mean that current form of religion which puts a manly morality in the place of the grace of God. Its cry is "Be a man!" rather than a child of God. The worship of Jesus is only a superstition, fastened

on to the great divine religion of "One God and his law." The great terms of the modern faith have been named Fraternity, Toleration, Humanitarian Civilization, Social Cosmopolitanism.

Every thoughtful man has recognized the growth of that mastering spirit in our day; but not every one has discovered the ominous fact that it is the very core of the Jewish spirit. If the Jew has not originated it, he has been its ablest defender. In the universities of Europe, in journalism, where he is peerless, in the cabinets of emperors, in legislative halls, as well as in the market place, he forces the bit of deistic liberalism into the mouth of the steeds of progress—and holds the reins. Hear a paragraph from one of the most acute thinkers of our day—the French savant Renan :

Every Jew is essentially a liberal. The enemies of Judaism, on the contrary, are enemies of the modern spirit. The creators of liberal dogma in religion are your old prophets, the Sibyllines, the Jewish school of Alexandria, the first Christians who were continuers of the Jewish prophets. These are the true founders of the spirit of justice in the world, and in serving the modern spirit the Jew, in reality, only serves the work to which he has contributed more than anybody in the past, and for which he has so much suffered. The true religion which he sees in the future, capable of binding

together all humanity, will be the realization of the religion of Isaiah, the ideal Jewish religion, freed from all accumulated dross.

Startling as it may be, there is a wonderful identification of the Jewish spirit and the dominant forces of the modern times. Israel was certainly elected, and, therefore, endowed to be king. In close connection with this fact, we should also name this other, namely: that the very soul of the most threatening evil of this day, the communistic movement, is the Jew. Whateley makes this affirmation:

The socialistic and communistic movements originated in 1848 with the Jews, who, with Karl Marx, initiated the crusade against existing social order and the relations of capital and labor. "Capital is robbery," is the fundamental principle of Marx. Ferdinand Lasalle, who founded what is now the German Socialist Party, was a Jew. The members of the Kagal, a Jewish secret society in Russia, show themselves to be the most radical of Nihilists. Ten times as many Jews as Russians, Poles, or Germans recruit the Nihilist ranks. What is still more remarkable is the prominence of women, with all the desperate courage and unblenching spirit of Judith among them. That the Jews have burning cause of animosity to the Russian government is terribly true, but none the less is it certain that the Jews compose an element of danger, alarming to the government and nations alike. In the United States, and remarkably in New York, the most lurid, blatant, and blasphemous of all the anarchists are the Jews, after the pattern of Johann Most. Jew is arrayed against Jew, anarchy against plutocracy.

IV. There is still another expression in this text, which is not without its meaning, and which helps us to understand the place of Israel in history: "IF YE WILL OBEY MY VOICE INDEED."

1. *Israel's election was conditional.* God will not thrust his blessings on his people against their own free choice. All this shall be "If ye shall obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant." In the freedom of will with which God has endowed us he encounters an obstacle which may modify the details of his plan and delay their execution, but it cannot defeat His final purpose. While man is free God is sovereign. To quote a Calvinistic expositor: "He who made the soul respects its rights, and will not force his way into its throne; he stands at the door and knocks, and only when the bolt is drawn does he consent to enter; but when he enters he passes in to reign." It was only when Israel had responded, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," that the covenant was sealed.

Should Israel change its will, the fact of the divine election does not save the nation. The fact is, God will remove every obstacle to his great redemption purpose, even though that

obstacle be the elect people themselves. Very soon the covenant people violated their vow, and God modified his promise to them. Instead of making every man a priest he instituted a priestly order for educational purposes. Shortly after entering the promised land, when they lusted for a king, they lost their claim to individual royalty, and in the hardness of their hearts, God gave them a king.

God's will moves right on. If those who are called keep step with it, they are blessed. If they turn aside, then they are cursed. They are compelled to serve his sovereign purpose, if not by their obedience, then by their disobedience.

XI

THE DECALOGUE

Deut. 4. 12, 13: "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone."

IN studying the covenant which God made with Israel at Sinai we have already reviewed the promise; we shall now review the requirements. "Now therefore if ye shall obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant." So also in Exod. 34. 28 they are expressly called "the words of the covenant." In a theme so vast I can make general statements only. My first is this:

I. THE DECALOGUE, AS THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT, IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT VAST SYSTEM OF LAW KNOWN AS THE MOSAIC.

It is really too bad that so many have made the mistake of identifying them. That was the fatal blunder which Israel afterward made. Even in the Christian Church the opinion pre-

vails that all the commands of the Mosaic system are embraced in the ten. Even so careful a biblical student as Calvin, in his commentaries, reduces all the ceremonial institutions to one or more of these commandments. I think that this vast system of law—civil, criminal, judicial, and ceremonial—was framed after the covenant law, not to expand it but to enforce it. As Fairbairn says, "Its chief object was to secure through the instrumentality of the magistrate, that if the proper love should fail to influence the hearts and lives of the people, still the *right* should be maintained."

The law, understanding by it the entire system, was designed as an educator to lead the people up into the great principles of life embodied in the Decalogue and afterward exhibited in Christ. "The law is our school-master to bring us to Christ." Nor, from the nature of the case, was the law to last forever. We may have expressed in the fundamental document of our liberty the great principles of our national life, but when we come to shape the laws designed to regulate the conduct of the people we must deal with the sentiments and the habits existing at the time in the community. It is truly said that nothing is gained

but much is lost by legislation that is far in advance of the public sentiment; and so very frequently the lawmaker has to consider not what is absolutely best, but what in the circumstances will work best.

We can illustrate by reference to slavery in our own nation. In the great charter of our Independence is stated the principle "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But slavery was here, and to wipe it out at once would be a perilous experiment, even supposing it to have been possible. What, then, was the thing to do? To express the principle, as the nation's idea, natural and political equality, but by no means to make laws ignoring slavery. Laws were made not for the ideal condition but for the actual, laws to regulate slavery, and in some States to relieve and finally exterminate it. Now that slavery is gone the minor legislation becomes obsolete. We outlive the particular laws by coming up into the general principle. So in Israel the particular laws were of temporary meaning. Jesus in discussing one such said that Moses wrote it, "for the hardness of your hearts," though from

the beginning of creation God meant it to be otherwise. The minor laws were to continue in power only till the people coming into the life of the fundamental law should no longer need them.

Again, the circumstances connected with the delivery of the Decalogue give it a place peculiarly its own. While all the rest of the law was given by God through the lips of Moses, it was spoken by God himself and with an awful display of splendor and solemnity never before witnessed.

Imagine, if you can, an encampment of more than two million Israelites on the green plains of Sinai, shut in from the sandy wastes by lofty mountain walls. Look upon that dreadful mount, from which, on penalty of death, both man and beast are kept at a distance. It stands like a massive cathedral lifting its spires up two thousand feet into the blue vault of heaven. It blazes with fire. Black clouds wrap it about, and rise like the smoke of a furnace up toward the sky. Thunderbolts shoot out with blinding flashes in quick succession, and the voice thereof reverberates from mountain to mountain. A voice like the blast of a trumpet is heard, and grows louder and louder till the air quivers, as

though filled with an invisible though real presence. The mountain reels like a drunken man. The heart of nature quakes with earthquake throbs. The people fall upon their faces with mortal terror. Even stout-hearted Moses, accustomed to the terrors of the wilderness, "exceedingly feared and quaked." The roaring thunder is awful beyond expression; but it becomes a thousandfold more so when it becomes articulate. Think of it! A thunder voice speaking: "I am the Lord thy God. . . . Thou shalt not"—then follow the Ten Commandments.

In addition to that, these laws were written by God's own finger and on tables of stone. Does Fairbairn make more of that fact than God meant when he says, "Stones written on both sides, so as to cover the entire surface and not have room for future additions, as if what was already written might admit of improvements, and written on durable tables of stone, while the rest of the law was written on parchment or paper?" It was for no lack of writing materials, for they existed in great abundance in Egypt and its neighborhood. The stone points to the perpetuity which belongs to the law as an expression of the divine will originating in the divine nature. It was

an image of the truth uttered by our Lord, "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Thus the commandments of the Decalogue were plainly recognized as containing in themselves the sum and substance of what was strictly required by the covenant.

Another thing may be said of the peculiar place of the Decalogue: our Lord held it up as the perfect code. When the young man asked him for the way of attaining eternal life Jesus quoted from the Decalogue and told him to obey it. And, again, after assenting to the two features of the Decalogue as the very essence of the law, he said, "This do and thou shalt live." In his dispute with the Pharisees the chief point at issue was just that. They exalted the minor law, the ceremonial observance, and threw the duties inculcated in the Ten Commandments in the background. He brought the Decalogue forward and gave it its true place. So did the apostles after him. In all the protracted discussions concerning the law all Paul's examples are taken from the very words of these tables, or what they clearly forbade or required. For these reasons, then, we affirm that the Ten Com-

mandments only were the requirements of the covenant.

II. NOW LET US SEEK THE REASON FOR THESE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COVENANT.

1. *The foundation and source of the moral law is God's character.* "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," is the way in which the Decalogue is introduced. The Hebrew name here used, Everlasting, Eternal, Almighty, intimates that the principles of law have their standing in the character of God. "I am . . . thou shalt not." That is the connection. And it is this that makes the law so awful in its unchangeable majesty. It is law not merely because it is best, but because God is. You cannot change the moral law without changing the character of God: and that would be to dethrone Jehovah and change the entire universe.

Men used to discuss the question whether a thing was right because God willed it, or whether he willed it because it was right. I wonder how that ever became a question. God wills what he is. His character, not his power, determines his will; else, as I have seen it suggested, if the devil had created this world,

wrong would be right, for the reason that the creative power had willed it. Then we have the terrible doctrine that might makes right. Right cannot be anything else than what it is because God is what he is. Hence I say, not that you ought to obey his law, but that you must. If you do not do it voluntarily, you will involuntarily suffer the consequences. There is no escape from law. In it you live; under it you are crushed. That is what F. W. Robertson calls the "categorical imperative"—a sense of duty that commands absolutely, not saying, "It is better," but "Thou shalt." Why? Because thou shalt: that is all.

In the same way I say you must obey the laws of nature. Not to obey is not to escape the law. Escape by disobedience! Is law escaped when justice fetters your wrists and locks you in a cell? How slowly the world learns that liberty is in obedience and lawlessness is bondage! The freedom of sin! What a monster delusion! No officer of the law ever pursued a criminal more persistently or effectively than nature pursues those who transgress its law. True liberty is not in freedom but in conformity to law. Law is only that order which describes the good of all it

guides. To violate that order is to come within its merciless grip. There are no more abject slaves than the lawless. The freeman is he who comes into the love of the good. The moment his heart is right, so that he knows and loves the will of God, that moment for him "there is no law."

2. *The fact that God's character is made the basis of our moral behavior is proof of the fact that we have natures akin to his. We have divine possibilities.*

God does not ask the stars to be holy, nor the trees, nor the beasts of the field. They have a law of their own, not the law of his character. But he commands us to holiness, and gives his reason—"for I am holy." He commands us to keep the Sabbath, and gives as the reason that he rested on the Sabbath day. He commands us to do no murder, and his reason is, as John states it, because he is Love, and love is life. To destroy human life is to destroy the image of God. He commands us to truthfulness because he is a God of truth and cannot lie. And so of every moral law. Its reason lies back in God's nature. Every law, in so far as we obey it, brings us into God's character. To obey the law perfectly, as did Jesus, is to be a Godlike man. The

possible divinity in us would become the actual by a perfect obedience.

3. And this suggests a third fact: *A reason for the commands of the Decalogue is to be found in the very nature of man.* It expresses our true nature, and to vary from its requirements is to fall below the dignity of true manhood. Now that the Ten Commandments are declared, we are able to see that they inhere in nature itself. There is not one of them that we can ignore without suffering a personal loss, and that not because God has commanded it but because it is so. It was so before the words were spoken. And God spoke them not to oppress us with a load of obligations but to lift from us a load of degradation. He gave us law not to bind but to liberate us.

Men sometimes chafe under what they choose to call the restraints of God's law, as if they were slavish. There is not only no liberty but no nobility but in obedience. So far from caging you, the law throws open the door and the eagle spirit soars aloft. Anarchy is barbarism. Immorality is loss of divinity—brutality.

III. HAVING SETTLED THAT THE DECALOGUE
CONTAINS THE ONLY REQUIREMENTS OF THE

COVENANT MADE AT SINAI, AND THAT GOD MADE THESE REQUIREMENTS BECAUSE HIS OWN CHARACTER AND MAN'S GOOD MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO DO OTHERWISE, WE ARE PREPARED TO STUDY ITS CONTENTS. Of course we cannot do that fully within the limits of a single sermon. Each separate commandment contains material for a full discourse. But we will state a few general facts relating to these great laws.

1. Our attention has been frequently called to *the negative form in which they have been cast*. Is there any reason why they should be read, "Thou shalt not," rather than "Thou shalt"? There is. A prohibition means that there is a disposition to do the thing prohibited. The statute books reveal the character of the crimes that are committed at the time they were enacted. They vary in different ages, and hence the need of constant revisals and new enactments. But the things prohibited in the Decalogue are the crimes committed in every age and among all people. These are the basal as well as the universal sins. Hence their negative form. If men were not inclined to worship something other than God, the first commandment would not be

needed. If there were no murder in men's hearts, the sixth commandment would not be required.

These ten negatives exhibit a shocking degree of depravity in the human heart and life. Paul tells us, "The law was added because of transgression." The law is put in a negative form for another reason, namely, law can only restrain the act; it cannot create the positive virtue. It may prevent false witnessing, but it cannot make men love the truth and protect the reputation of one's neighbor. It may restrain injustice, but it cannot make one love justice. Statutory law restrains crime and regulates actions, but it does not transform the sinful heart. Its power is only negative. If ever the heart of man is to be renewed, it will not be by law but by grace.

2. *These laws are divided into two tables: those relating to God and those relating to man.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." That is the positive form of which the Decalogue is the negative expression.

Love to God—(1) In excluding all others: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

(2) In worshiping him rather than images: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (3) In revering his name: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." (4) In the consecration of the seventh day in worship of him: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

The second table embraces our duty toward each other—(1) In relation to home: "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (2) In relation to human life: "Thou shalt not kill." (3) In relation to personal purity: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (4) In relation to property: "Thou shalt not steal." (5) In relation to truth: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (6) In relation to personal rights: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."

How simple all that seems on the surface! How apt we are to blame Israel for forfeiting their exalted privileges when the covenant terms were so easy! But, brothers, I want to say to you there is not one of you who has kept all these laws. I go further and ask you to review these commandments in the light of the Saviour's interpretation, and then see if you can find a single one that you have kept. The form of your indictment before the courts of heaven, when the books of judgment are opened and you are judged out of the books,

will be that you have broken every one of these fundamental laws.

With all our light, we are as truly condemned as were these blundering ex-slaves. But "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Under the law we are condemned. In Christ we are redeemed:

"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: . . . But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

XII

AARON

Exod. 32. 21: "And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?"

THE name of Aaron will forever be associated with Israel's idolatry at the base of Sinai. Not that he originated it, or encouraged it, but he did not *prevent* it. He resisted but feebly, tried to compromise, and finally consented.

Men are rightly measured by their trusts. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Aaron was faithless to his trust. His weakness was criminal. When the Israelites clamored for an idol he ought to have thrown himself between them and their apostasy, and never surrendered until his body lay at their feet a corpse. That pagan general was infinitely better than Aaron, who sprang in front of his retreating army and, with drawn sword, cried, "By the great Jove, if ye *will* be cowards, ye must be brave enough to crush the body of your leader under your feet." The

pagan's decision saved his nation. Aaron's hesitancy lost his. And were it not for the sublime strength and prayer of Moses, it never would have been recovered. "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive" (Exod. 32. 32). It is bad enough for a man upon whom no responsibility is laid to do wrong. But when a people go into sin through the weakness of their leader that weakness is a *crime*. Aaron was criminally weak.

Let us study some of the particulars. They will not only bring the dreadful picture of Israel's sin before us, but also help our vision into the secrets of our character.

Three things will command our thought:

I. AARON'S ENDOWMENT AND TRUST.

Aaron was the brother of the most conspicuous man of Old Testament history, and that fact alone makes it difficult for us to properly estimate him. The light of a candle is appreciated in a dark room, but held up against the blaze of the sun it is only a black speck. It is Aaron's misfortune that the world looks at him against the brilliant background of such a luminary as Moses, whose wisdom has illuminated more than thirty centuries.

1. But *Aaron was a man of rich endow-*

ments. The fact is seen partly in the commanding influence he acquired among his brother slaves in Egypt and his success in inspiring in them a hope of freedom. Ewald tells us that the Egyptian historian Manetho points out a conjunction of two great movements which resulted in Israel's liberation, one in Egypt and one in Asia. And his story harmonizes well with the Bible account. How happens it that just at the time Moses started on his divine mission to Egypt Aaron starts on a similar inspiration to find Moses, whom he meets at Mount Sinai? During the exile of his brother, Aaron had been at work at home, and had by his own worth become the foremost man among his countrymen. And, seeing that the time was ripe, he went to talk with his exiled brother about it. And this is a very remarkable fact when we consider the family from which he sprang. His was by no means the leading family of his tribe, and his tribe was by no means the leading one in Israel. In patriarchal times Reuben was first; in the prosperous times in Egypt Joseph was chief. But toward the close of the Egyptian period Levi comes to the front and its best men from out of one of its most obscure families.

What rallied Israel about Aaron was not

the fact that he was their hereditary leader, but his own commanding genius. His superior endowment is also seen in the splendid work he did after his forgiveness and reinstatement at Mount Sinai. The record of that man's life as the head of the priestly order of God's people is a most brilliant page in sacred biography.

2. Aaron's gift's were: (1) Those of an orator—impressive physical presence, graceful manners, winning voice, ready utterance, persuasive eloquence, personal magnetism, quick sensibilities which sometimes are moved to powerful passion—gifts that command ready attention and win popular applause. These gifts are sure to pass for more than real worth, just as a woman with a pretty face and ready speech will usually command more admiration than her plain but more worthy sister. Superficial brilliance is more applauded than solid worth. Polished brass is preferred to tarnished gold. To the average man Moses would contrast badly with Aaron. His mental habits, acquired in the schools of Egypt, lifted him out of the sphere in which the thought of his countrymen moved; his rustic manners, acquired by a life of forty years in the wilderness, and his slow speech, would show off

Aaron's more graceful gifts to immense advantage.

(2) Another of Aaron's gifts is one which is attended with considerable peril, yet is a gift, namely, he was very sensitive to the influence of a stronger mind than his own. That is commonly reckoned a weakness rather than an element of power, but I am sure that the common view is not right. I grant that the receptive nature is not to be favorably compared with the creative. But the creative genius is very rare, and where that is wanting he is a happy man who can absorb others. Egotistic independence is weakness, while humble dependence is power. Some of the greatest rulers in history have been those whose beneficent rule has been due chiefly to the wisdom with which they selected and used their counselors.

It is not the shame but the glory of Emperor William that he allowed his will to be the channel of Bismarck's creations. It is said that that imperial will of the first half of the nineteenth century had at times as little of the self-reliant element in his nature as the lowest subaltern in the ranks. When he once resolved nothing could move him, but to make him resolve he must have the approval

of some trusted mind. The counsels of Talleyrand became the will of Napoleon. The most princely character of history said, "As I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

It was a happy thing for Aaron that he could recognize the superior worth of his younger brother and consent to be his voice. These two endowments—those of an orator, which gave him access to the people, and those of a receptive spirit, which enabled him to absorb the divine thoughts of Moses—made Aaron the very man to be the go-between, that is, *the priest*. His gifts fitted him for the priesthood and that was his trust. He was indeed a great man. Not of the highest order of greatness, nevertheless, a great man, who stands at the head of a sacred order illustrious in history, and is the type of Him who entered into the Holy of holies behind the veil and is even now making intercession for the people.

II. AARON'S TEST AND FAILURE.

1. It is said that every character *has to suffer a severe test before it is intrusted with the work for which it seems to have been designed*. The wise tourist who would climb the

heights of the Alps selects his alpenstock with special care. He puts it to a severe strain to prove its strength before he ventures to trust it in his perilous ascent. In some such way God tests character before he intrusts it with its responsible work. A close observer of history and character says: "He who enters upon a new life or begins a special enterprise must lay his account with trial. Some test must meet him on the very threshold of his endeavor, and according as he stands that will his future career be. If he fail, he will be turned away from the door by which he sought to pass into his work. If he be found approved, he will be introduced to higher honors than, up to that moment, he ever thought of."

Illustrations abound in history. The parents of our race failed in the very first test. Abraham's great trial resulted in approval. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Gen. 22. 12). Jacob at Peniel rose to the emergency of the hour and became a "Prince of God." Jesus went up from his inauguration to the temptation of the wilderness and came forth *a conqueror*.

2. *Aaron's trial came to him at the base of Sinai, and he gave way.* The alpenstock

broke under its test. According to the ancient story, it happened on this wise: Moses had been for forty days in the holy mount in solitary communion with Jehovah. The people, thinking that their great leader was gone never to return, and becoming impatient to be on their way, went to Aaron and demanded, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." It may be a query in your mind how it was possible for a people who had a godly ancestry, and who had witnessed such recent displays of divine power as had these hosts, so soon to lapse into idolatry.

I think we can understand it if we bear in mind three things:

(1) The instinct to embody our deepest ideas in some outward form or symbol is universal. It is said, and with truth, "a *purely* spiritual worship is impossible to any man; to those who were at the very beginning of an effort to introduce a divine service, it was absolutely unintelligible." Those people could not even conceive of religion as an inner life.

(2) These people had been for generations in a condition of slavery in a nation of idolatry. In the absence of any great religious

teacher, and under the powerful influence of the idolatrous instructors, they had while in Egypt mixed the traditions of their fathers with the practice of idolaters. (See Josh. 24. 14.) Among those they were familiar with was the bull, either Mnevis of Heliopolis, representing the sun, or Apis of Memphis, representing Osiris.

(3) Their purpose was not to forsake Jehovah, as appears from the fact that they prepared the feast "to the Lord" (Exod. 32. 5). It was to worship the Lord down on their own level. It was not the first command they broke, but the second.

3. *Aaron ought to have resisted Israel's demand with energy.* He did resist, but very feebly. It is very profitable to trace the steps of his rapid and awful fall:

(1) He himself lets us into a knowledge of the beginning, at least into the first conscious beginning, of his fall—fear of the people. When Moses demanded, "What did this people unto thee?" he replied, "Let not the anger of my lord wax hot, . . . they are set on mischief" (Exod. 32. 22). A learned rabbi, on the authority of an old tradition, says that the people had made an earlier demand for an idol, but Aaron and Hur had resisted. In the

violent revolt that ensued, Hur, who was associated with Aaron, was massacred by the frenzied people. It was when a second revolt arose that Aaron, fearing a similar fate, reluctantly complied, but only after praying, "O, Lord, I look up to thee who knowest the hearts of men and who dwellest in the heavens. Thou art witness that I act thus, contrary to my own will. Lay it not to my charge." Ah! that was a delusion. A godly man should fear nothing in the universe but *sin*. Better be a martyr than *sin*. Better a mangled body than one quivering with shame. A dead Hur in honor is infinitely better than a living Aaron in dishonor.

(2) The next step in his downward course was in temporizing with *sin*. He hoped to defeat it, not by an open resistance, but by appealing to the cupidity of the people, which he hoped was stronger than their desire for an idol. He demanded their gold and ornaments. But, alas for Aaron! the love of wealth and finery did not break their resolution. To the falling man's horror those twigs to which he caught gave way. The gold was laid at his feet and he must make something.

(3) He deceives himself by a freak of chance into what he chose to be a providential

indorsement of his course: "I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." Strange delusion! The successful issue of a wicked thing is divine indorsement!

(4) Another and last effort was to delay the idolatry. He carved the image with a graver's tool. Possibly this was an effort to gain time under a pretense of giving the calf beauty of form. Then, finally, he says, "Tomorrow we will prepare the feast," hoping that yet Moses would come down and prevent the crime. How anxiously he looks for the familiar form of his brother descending the mountain! "O that he would come!" Tomorrow came and there was no help for it. He had yielded too far for any retreat and he was fallen. "Weighed and found wanting."

Brothers, evil in germ is evil in growth. Don't tamper with sin. Never compromise. To temporize is to weaken—and you need all your strength to stand in the evil hour.

III. AARON WAS FORGIVEN AND RESTORED TO THE PLACE FOR WHICH HE WAS ORIGINALLY DESTINED.

I wish that time would permit me to expand this fact, for it is the great theme of the gospel, imaged in the history of this fallen man thou-

sands of years ago—the restoration of the sinner. It is distressing to trace the downward course of a weak and tempted man into the shame and curse of sin. It is glorious to watch one coming up out of death into life. The most sublime spectacle in history is that of the recovery of a lost soul. A man with his spirit marred and enfeebled by sin, and under the just condemnation of death, is not only relieved from the execution of the penalty, but is recovered from the spiritual wreck in himself. He comes into the priesthood and stands before “the cloud of his presence” in the Holy of holies.

Salvation! O the joyful sound!
What pleasure to our ears!
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears.

But while we rejoice in the blessed fact of salvation, we cannot too carefully consider the means by which it is secured. True forgiveness is not a thing easily wrought. The hindrance to a true pardon lies not in the unwillingness of God, for the divine heart is love, but in his holiness. How can a Holy One justify a guilty sinner? It would be false love in him to ignore our transgressions, as though they had never existed. Such a course, so far

from saving us from our sin, would destroy all moral consciousness, and so open the way for a descent into deeper iniquity. There are two things made prominent in this story of Aaron's pardon—intercession and atonement.

1. *Intercession.* Moses prayed for Aaron (Deut 9. 20). That special prayer is not recorded, but we can judge of its character by the one he offered for the people.

“Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” Exod. 32. 31.

What a prayer was that!—ejaculatory, passionate, brief, as earnest prayers usually are. He braves his own person against the fiery wrath of Jehovah! Do not ask me how that intercessory prayer affected the will of God. It is enough for us to know it did. So also I know we too have an Intercessor—“the Son of God who hath entered into the heavens and ever liveth to make intercession for us.” I sometimes fear he will not hear my prayer, I am so unworthy and so sinful. But he prays for me.

The Father hears him pray,
His dear Anointed One:
He cannot turn away
The presence of his Son.

2. *A second need for Aaron's recovery was atonement.* "Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin" (Exod. 32. 30). Sin cannot be expiated by future amendment. It must be punished. There must be some exhibition of its awfulness in dreadful suffering, else we will not know its dreadfulness. If forgiveness be easy, sin will be easy. But when forgiveness is achieved by a painful atonement, then the depth of character is reached, and the sinner comes out of sin, not only with a sense of the love of God, but also with a reverence for his holiness, which makes his character the rule of life. And so it comes to pass that God's love as truly demands justice as it demands pardon. Justice is as necessary to salvation as love. So far from their being in conflict, they meet in the mighty work of restoration. "Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

This is the truth God gave to Moses when he passed by him while he was hid in the cleft of the rock: "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant

in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

Brothers, our atonement was made on the cross. Have you fallen? Are your life and hopes a wreck? Arise. I voice to you the heart of God: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55. 7).

XIII

THE TABERNACLE

Exod. 40. 18, 19: "And Moses reared up the tabernacle . . . as the Lord commanded."

THE tabernacle is a type of the Christian church. Let us study it as such, hoping to get a clearer view into the meaning of the Church of Christ.

Before beginning this study, however, let a prefatory remark be made, suggested by the history of the construction of the tabernacle. Previous to its erection Moses by divine command asked all the people to bring the best they had for its construction and ornamentation, by which God taught Israel and us two things.

1. *What we ourselves can do, God will not do, even though it be specially for his glory.* He could just as easily have caused that tabernacle to spring from the sands of the desert as a few weeks before he caused the waters of the Red Sea to roll back for the passage of his people. But man could not command the waters of the sea, so God's will

moved through the billows, leaving a track on which the hosts could walk. The Israelites could build the tabernacle, hence God required it. So God could have caused this building to spring from the soil, as he draws therefrom the grass and trees. He who can speak worlds into being certainly can speak a church structure into existence. But we can erect our own building. God has given us men like Bezaleel and Aholiab, concerning the former of whom God said: "I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship" (Exod. 31. 3-5).

The measure of our ability is the measure of our responsibility. It is useless for us to ask God to do for us what we can do ourselves. If we do, we ask amiss, and receive no answer. But having done the best we can, and reached a point beyond which we cannot go, then let us ask; and while we wait the arm of Omnipotence moves.

2. *God demands the best we have for his church.* It is not that which we can just as

readily do without that is acceptable to God. The tabernacle might have been made of skins and stones and rude timber gathered in the wilderness. But Moses, by divine command, asks more: "And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, and oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, and onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate. And every wise-hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded" (Exod. 35. 4-10).

God requires a costly gift; not that he cares for our gold, but that the gift of cost carries with it the giver. God wants you. And in making these expensive gifts the very heart of the people is wrought into the structure of the church. A church building without the heart of the people is of little value. The thousands of magnificent edifices which have

been erected throughout Christian lands for the worship of Jehovah are not monuments of pride and the tyranny of religion. They are the expression of the Christian's faith, the outflowing of his heart. The story of the Israelites' gifts for the tabernacle is only an early instance of what ever since has been a common fact. The offerer's heart pours out his treasure.

We are now prepared for the study of the tabernacle itself.

I. I have said the tabernacle was a type of the Church. It was more than that. **IT WAS THE CHURCH ITSELF, IN ITS EARLY BEGINNINGS—THE CHURCH IN EMBRYO.**

It was the first building ever erected on earth for the worship of God, and it contains the thought of God as to what constitutes the Church. It was not of Moses's planning. If it were, then in studying it we get at only human thought. God was the architect. Moses and his helpers were only the executors of the divine idea. Consequently, nothing in it is without its meaning. Every post and sheet and apartment and article of furniture had its significance.

True, the tabernacle is gone, and was de-

signed especially for the Jews; but the thought embodied in it is eternal, and was meant for us. The symbols have passed away, while the things symbolized live forever. The type has disappeared; the anti-type abides. It is not a useless thing, then, for us to recall what we know of the tabernacle, and note some of the great thoughts God has given us in it.

1. I will be rapid in my *description of the tabernacle*. It was a portable building designed by God as the place of his abode among his people. It is frequently called "the tabernacle of the congregation." But that expression is very misleading, and even conceals its real meaning. Our new version translates it more accurately "the tent of meeting." It was so called not because that was the place where the people were to meet each other, but that was the place where God came to meet them: "The tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel." That is the origin and significance of the expression so commonly applied to the church building—"meeting-house." It is the place where we go to meet God.

The tabernacle was constructed specifically to contain the sacred ark, which was the chosen symbol of the Divine Presence. It had three apartments.

(1) The outer court, which was made very large (one hundred and fifty feet by seventy-five feet) and was surrounded by a high wall of curtains to shield it from the gaze of the world, indicating the exclusiveness of the Church. "Come out from among them" is the meaning of the separating sheets. In this court were placed the great altar and the brazen laver, instruments of sacrifice, indicating that there is no approach into the presence of God but by way of expiation. Our sin confronts us when we would draw near to Him who is "perfect in holiness." But none of us need despair, for no sooner do we pass the curtains of the tabernacle than we see the burning sacrifice, which means atonement for sin. Brothers, our great altar is the cross. Our sacrifice is Jesus. Our plea is not our obedience but his atonement:

Thou loving, all-atoning Lamb,
Thee, by thy painful agony,
Thy bloody sweat, thy grief and shame,
Thy cross and passion on the tree,
Thy precious death and life—I pray,
Take all, take all my sins away.

(2) In one extremity of the court was the tabernacle proper, ceiled and walled. It was divided into two apartments. The larger one was called the holy place. It contained three articles. First, the altar of incense, on which sweet spices were daily burned with fire taken from the great altar of sacrifice. Its spiritual meaning clearly was the adoration of the heart whose sin has been covered. On the north of this altar was the table of shewbread, overlaid with gold, on which were placed twelve loaves corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. The best description of its symbolism I have seen is: "The shewbread represents the fruits of diligence in that holy living to which all God's culture of the soul ever tends, even as bread is the ultimate result of the natural husbandry of the agriculturist in the cultivation of his field." On the south of the altar of incense was the candlestick of gold with its seven burners, which symbolized that light of wisdom and holiness in man by which the world is illuminated. Praise, holiness, truth—these are the essentials in the holy place.

(3) The third and last place was the Holy of holies. It was a solemn, awful place. The Jews could scarcely speak of it save in hushed tones. The thought of it was a terror to them

when they had done wrong—a joy when they had done right. There was no artificial light in that place, for it was God's own room, and he was the light thereof. The holy shekinah, the glory of the Lord, filled the apartment. It was the presence chamber of the Most High. No man ever entered it save the high priest, and he only on the great day of atonement with his fingers stained with the blood of the slain lamb. Its cubical shape, its mode of approach, its contents, as well as its name, all marked it as Holy of holies. In this room was placed the ark of the covenant, which means God's presence. On the top of this ark was a little lid called the mercy seat, indicating to us that we reach our hands down into the awful mysteries of God's presence only through mercy. This mercy seat was closely guarded by two cherubim, one on either side, bending and spreading their wings, overshadowing it. No profane hands can reach that place. The spirit watchmen guard it. In the ark were placed three things: the tables of the law, prefiguring the law written in the heart and graven on the mind; hidden manna, type of our spiritual sustenance, that living bread which cometh down from heaven of which if any man eat, he shall never die; Aaron's rod

which budded. This teaches life from the dead. What can be more dead than a stick, cut from the tree, seasoned, polished, and used for years as a staff? Aaron's staff budded like the branches of a tree in spring. Dead, it blossoms again with life.

2. *Peculiar power accompanied the ark.* Wherever it was borne a supernatural presence was felt. It guided Israel from Mount Sinai to the land of promise. Carried by the priests down the slopes of Jordan, the waters separated and the host passed over dry shod. Borne around Jericho, the ancient walls of that fortified city crumbled and fell. In the camp of the Philistines they are tortured until they deliver the sacred symbol to whom it belonged.

Thus ever is the Church of God. Mark its track in history. Ignorance, superstition, vice retreat before it. It awakens slumbering thought. It purifies and exalts every emotion. It frees the slave. It redeems womanhood. It gives to childhood a divine significance. It grasps the secrets of nature and turns them to use. Literally it makes "the wilderness blossom as the rose." It is the one thing that can throw upon the darkness of heathendom Light.

II. THE CHURCH DID NOT ALWAYS REMAIN AMONG THE ISRAELITES IN THE FORM OF THE TABERNACLE.

As the years went on and the people became wealthy and powerful, the humble tabernacle was merged into the gorgeous temple—and with God's approval. By which we are taught that the Church was never designed to be a brake upon the wheels of human progress. God never meant that his Church should hold the world back to the uncultured age of the wilderness life. It is in perfect harmony with all progress that is natural. God cares little for the form in which the Church is shaped, so long as it is adapted to the condition of the people and contains the great idea he put in it. The form must change with the varying conditions of life, but the divine thought is unchangeable.

It is not always an easy thing to recognize a permanence of thought in a change of form. I imagine some old Israelite who is accustomed to the worship of the tabernacle, after looking upon the stained and weather-beaten curtains of the sacred structure, and then walking on the tessellated pavement and along the grand cloisters of the magnificent

temple, would be tempted to suppose that in the change he had lost his church. But no! let him think. He will see that the thought is still there; the temple is modeled after the tabernacle, and the main idea—the thing for which it was built—the ark of the covenant, was borne into the Holy of holies.

There are good men in our times who mourn over what they choose to call modern innovations in the Church of Christ. With our adieu to the log houses and rude churches and methods of our fathers, they think there is a loss of the spirituality and power of the ancient Church. Be undeceived, my brothers. God's will moves on toward the consummation of his purpose in history. If we keep pace with his movement, we cannot abide in the forms of the past. It would be a shame for David to live in a house of cedar while "the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains." It was because God was with him that he purposed an innovation. To use the authority of the Church to make a form which was needful at a particular time, sacred for all time, is blasphemy, identical with Pharisaism. It blinds rather than illumines. What was the blindness of those who crucified Him who was Truth? The love of a holy past

which they would perpetuate forever. While we do not ignore forms of truth, we want living truth itself. All life changes its form.

The old barns and methods of our fathers were good. But for us to cling to the barns when we can afford the temple is for us to stunt the growth of the plant divine. Farewell, old tabernacle! Welcome, thrice welcome, the temple. But we cling with a life grip to the old divine idea, that God put in the ancient structure—Jehovah with us.

III. There came another change far greater than that from the tabernacle to the temple—still not a change in thought—only in form. **THE CHURCH MATERIAL BECAME THE CHURCH SPIRITUAL; THE CHURCH LIMITED BECAME THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.**

Jesus told of it to the woman of Samaria by the well of Sychar. She said:

“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But

the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The ancient people seemed to think that God's presence was confined to some particular locality, and that the places of his manifestation were peculiarly sacred. Thus Jacob regarded Bethel after his wonderful vision there. "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Thus the Jews regarded Mount Moriah, where the divine shekinah, or visible glory of God, constantly beamed forth from underneath the wings of the cherubim over the mercy seat. Thus the Samaritans worshiped in Mount Gerizim, because there the ancient patriarchs built altars to God, and because there, when the children of Israel had passed over Jordan, six tribes stood to pronounce the blessings of God upon the people.

But the coming of Jesus, who was "God with us," inaugurates a new era. Henceforth worship is not to be limited to any prescribed form or place. "God is spirit," and the spirit

of the worshiper holds direct and intimate communion with him. Worship is not a form but a spiritual exercise. God's Spirit fills all space; so every place may be a Bethel, and even our bodies may be temples of the Holy Ghost.

This great change from the formal to the spiritual Church was marked by a signal event in the moment when the Son of God poured out his life upon the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Nature trembled in the agony of that awful hour. The sun hid his face and the land was wrapped in darkness. The heart of the earth was shaken. The doors of the sepulchers flung open for the dead to come forth in a few days. There were terrors above and terrors beneath and terrors in the hearts of men.

But something more awful than all this, to the Jewish mind, occurred. I can almost see the startled look upon the Jew's face as he feels his way through the darkened streets. The stones tremble by the earthquake's power. The very air seems alive with ghostly presence. But O! he is horrified beyond all description when it is whispered in his ear, "The veil of the temple is rent in twain, and the Holy of holies is exposed to the world."

But what was so awful to the Jew only marked a step onward in the development of the Church. The presence chamber of God is transferred. Where? Where now is the Holy of holies? It is where God manifests himself. Upon the throne of his glory in the heavens? Yes, but also upon the throne of your heart. Brothers, here it is—within you. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” Here is the ark of the covenant, the abode of God. Here is the hidden manna—Christ in you. Here is the table of the law—written in your minds and graven on your hearts. Here in your blossoming humanity is Aaron’s rod. Now the Holy of holies is where we are. Do you want to know where the sacred places are—your Bethel, your Mount Moriah, your Gerizim? They are where you carry the spirit of a true worshiper—in your homes where God abides, at the family altar, in your closet, in your counting rooms, on the streets, in recreation, here in this house consecrated to his service—everywhere the spiritual mind can find the omnipresent God.

In conclusion allow a few words of practical suggestion. We have seen in the study of the structure and history of the tabernacle, that

the Church of God is the place where he meets his people—"the tent of meeting." We have also seen that the way of admission is, first, by the way of the great altar—pardon through atoning sacrifice; and, second, an entrance into a new life of praise—the altar of incense; of fruitfulness—the table of shewbread; and of lightbearing—the golden candlestick. We also learn the test of membership in the true Church, namely, access into the mystic contents of the ark of the covenant. Not by right but by mercy do we reach down there. But all who live in God do eat of the hidden manna. What is your daily bread? All in God have the tables of the law. What is your obedience? All in God are quickened into the might of the original life, and bud like Aaron's rod.

XIV

THE LEVITICAL LAW

Lev. 27. 34: "These are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai."

THE commandments here mentioned are those of the Levitical legislation, not the Decalogue. The Decalogue, brief, simple, comprehensive, and unchangeable, was the only law that God purposed to lay upon his people as the children of the covenant. It made no provision for a king, for it assumed every man to be a king. Personally royal, none who obeyed that law needed any other sovereign than God. It made no provision for a priesthood, but assumed every man to be a priest. Why create a mediator when everyone could approach God personally by his own altar as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Under the Decalogue alone the Israelites were a royal priesthood and a priestly royalty.

I. THE LEVITICAL LAW WAS AN AFTER CONSIDERATION, MADE NECESSARY BY THE IMMA-

TURITY AND UNFAITHFULNESS OF THE PEOPLE. Nor was it regarded as essential until many generations after it was given. It certainly remained long in practical disuse. There are those who think that this was due to the apostasy of the people, but it is possible that it was due, in part at least, to the feeling that it was a secondary matter, the supreme and only essential law being the Ten Commandments. We know that during the period of the Judges "every man did that which seemed right in his own eyes," utterly ignoring the plain specifications of the Levitical system. It was not till David's time that the holy shrine settled down at Jerusalem. The divine life pulsed not from a single center, but from many—Gilgal, Sechem, Bethel, Ophrah, Mizpeh, Hebron, Beersheba, Tabor, Carmel—all of which was in direct violation of this code. The worshipping Hebrews for many centuries, instead of going to the tabernacle or temple to find God, sought him on any high hill, through local priests, or without any priest at all. Saul and David both offered sacrifices with their own hands, ignoring the legal priesthood. Elijah deplored the breaking down of the local altars in the northern kingdom as a violation of the national covenant, all of which reveals the fact

that there was no systematic operation of the Levitical legislation for many generations after the days of Sinai.

Because of this fact there are those who rush at once to the conclusion that the book of Leviticus is the product of a much later age, framed to suit a cult steeped in sacerdotalism. The modern higher critics teach that this book of law was framed by certain learned men, chiefly of the priestly school, during or directly after the Babylonian captivity; that they embodied in their system the sacerdotal ideas which had developed during a thousand years of Israel's history, webbed it into many of the traditions of the wilderness, attached to it a history that was purely fictitious, and then, in order to give it authority, ascribed it all to Moses.

We wonder if these critics believe in the miraculous, for they certainly would have us believe in a miracle wrought by those post-exilic forgers. They would have us believe that these lawmakers made a law and persuaded the whole nation that they and their fathers had possessed it from the days of Moses. And it is remarkable that not a man had a suspicion of the deception till nearly twenty-five centuries later. None of the prophets, not

even Jesus or the apostles, ever dreamed that this great piece of externalism, which was smothering the life of the ancient Church, was only an invention of modern times.

Is it possible that our Lord would have given his indorsement to this law, and have called it "the Law of Moses," as he frequently did, if he knew that it was not of Moses at all? When he sent the lepers whom he healed to the priests, he did it by the authority of a law found only in Leviticus (14. 3-10). Many other instances have been pointed out in which Jesus justifies his own action and that of his disciples by laws found only in this code.

To place the origin of this law at any date later than the age of Moses is to brand the writers of it untrue, for they do in these twenty-seven chapters ascribe it to the great lawgiver no less than fifty-six times. It is, furthermore, to assume that Christ was either ignorant of the deception or deliberately became a party to it. And it assumes an incredible stupidity on the part of the people, who were persuaded that what was only a very recent thing had been the faith and practice of the Church of God through all their national history.

In accepting the Mosaic authority of this law we are not to suppose that it remained absolutely unchanged from the days of the wilderness. Indeed, Moses himself made alterations as, with a larger vision, he saw the need. As examples, in Exod. 23 provision is made for three annual feasts: in Lev. 23 for five. The age in which the Levites were to enter on their duty is given in one place as twenty-five, in another as thirty. If only two or three such instances could be named, we could account for them as clerical errors in transcription or some equally simple way. But we have three separate codes called respectively "The Book of the Covenant" (Exod. 21 to 23. 19), which is a collection of primitive laws adapted to people in the simplest sort of life, such as during the period of the Judges; the Deuteronomic law, which is a reproduction of the earlier legislation modified by a loftier ethical tone and spiritual thought; and, finally, the Levitical system, which relates chiefly to the ritual and its priesthood.

The probability is that Moses, in elaborating the primitive code to serve sacerdotal purposes, prepared Leviticus; and later, in order to serve a higher spiritual purpose, prepared Deuteronomy. The fact that he did not hesi-

tate to make alterations proves that he did not regard his work as a final and eternal statement. Nor is it needful for us to assume that later rabbis did not do the same. Indeed, there are seemingly unmistakable proofs that they did. But that does not invalidate the Mosaic origin of the law any more than the amendments we have made to the constitution of the United States throw discredit on the traditional origin of that historic document. This alteration only shows that the conscience of the Hebrews, as voiced by their best spirits, such as the prophets and the poets, did not regard their legal code to be the unchangeable truth in any such sense as they did the Decalogue. It was only a temporary means to an end, namely, *a holy people*. Its whole aim was to develop the spiritual element in man, instruct it, and bring it into such sovereign efficiency that he could safely rule his life without any external restraint at all, but solely by the power of a free communion with a Spirit from above.

Thus the law anticipated a condition in which every formal feature should pass away, and the whole law would be fulfilled in two words, or, rather, one word, LOVE, reaching out in two directions—for God, for man.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE LEVITICAL LEGISLATION IS TO UNFOLD THE PRINCIPLE OF HOLINESS WHICH ITS CODE ENSHRINES.

The book of Leviticus and the Epistle to the Hebrews should be studied together, for the two are one. But the former veils the divinity until the people are prepared to look upon it; the later lifts the veil. Sad indeed is the condition of the Israelites of to-day, who have lost their ancestral ritual, and to whom the promise of their holy service seems forever unvindicated. But to those who will listen to the voice of the unknown writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews the eternal verity issues from behind the moldy veil of the hoary service. The blossom is not lost when the fruit hangs mellow on the tree. We cannot in a single sermon study that ancient ritual in close detail, but we are sufficiently familiar with it to attempt, in a general way, two things: point out the eternal elements veiled in the Levitical code, and then note the realization of those elements in Christ.

The entire Levitical law is divided into three classes: those relating to the sacrifices and the priests; those relating to personal purity; and those relating to the separateness of God's

people from the heathen nations. We will view these in the reverse order given in the authoritative book.

1. *Separation.* The principle of this set of laws is stated in chapter 18, verses 3-5. Israel is to keep entirely separate from heathen people and heathen ways, for entanglement with them means the certain loss of their individuality as the people of God. That law has become so imbedded in the life of the Jewish nation, in one particular at least, as to hold them imperiously to this very day. Even when they have abandoned everything else that is distinctively Jewish, they still hold to their blood. To wed a Gentile is to cease to be finally a Jew. But the inner meaning of the command of separateness, they have overlooked, namely, *holiness*. When the good and bad commingle the result is not the impartation of the pure to the impure, but the exact reverse. Contact with rotten fruit causes the sound to decay. Among men "Evil communications corrupt good manners." When the sons of God married the daughters of men the first result was, "There were giants in the earth in those days; . . . men of renown." But at once began a degeneration which continued till at last the whole world was given

over to hopeless wickedness "as it was in the days of Noe." Historically the safety of God's people is to "Come out from among them and be ye separate."

The reason of this separateness may not be so apparent in our times as in the days of Israel, when the most unnatural crimes were not only commonly practiced, but sanctioned by religion and made a part of the service. But the law is still as imperative. When Christian people mingle in sympathetic fellowship with worldly minds, the result is a growing distrust of the genuineness of spiritual faith on the part of the worldly, and a sure inbreathing of the poison of worldliness by the children of the faith. When Christian and worldly men meet on the same level in daily business life it is almost impossible for the Christian to remain uncontaminated. The degeneration may for a long while be almost imperceptible, creeping into the sanctuary of the soul like the insidious approaches of typhoid, the victim hardly knowing what is ailing him till he lies prostrate at the brink of death. The poison is disguised. Greed is "acuteness," gambling speculations are "invested securities," willful debt is "pecuniary obligation," fraud is "foresight," robbery is

“trusts.” It eases conscience for a dishonest ledger by bringing the ivory and the peacocks and apes of Ophir into the holy city. It reimburses God for the neglect of prayer and holy meditation by keeping a profit and loss account with him. A few more dollars balances it all. In pleasure, in dress, in modes of speech, the child of God becomes so like the great God-forgetting world as to be altogether indistinguishable from it. Then come indifference to divine things, spiritual opaqueness, death.

In all the legal applications of this principle it is wonderful what wisdom is displayed. Here are many practical details which our modern legislators would do well to study in seeking to regulate the business and social relation of classes, castes, and nationalities. But out of this set of laws in the Levitical code arises the sublime thought which was the purpose of it all—*Holiness to the Lord*.

2. *Impurity.* The Levitical laws relating to impurity are many and varied. They distinguish the meats that are clean and unclean, and lay down the mode of eating lawful foods. They name the diseases that are unclean and define the manner of handling them. That of leprosy is specially made to

typify sin, and its ceremonial treatment unfolds to us the only mode of cleansing a defiled spirit. The code describes social evils, and wonderfully illuminates the intricate problems which are agitating modern society. Many think that no question of social economics is more satisfactorily answered than in this old legislation. It prescribes the limits of consanguinity within which marriage is permissible, and sets up a standard of chastity which, though scorned by the theory and practice of that age, is now taught by the best minds as having its justification in nature's law. All history and the latest science proclaim that this portion of the Levitical law is rooted deep in nature. Thus out of this code emerges the fact that the law of nature is the law of holiness. Holiness is health.

But these laws go infinitely farther than the fact that impurity is a natural curse. They teach that it is a spiritual calamity. And that is seen in two ways. First, in the fact that in departing from God in unbelief or neglect of worship the power to hold the fleshly appetites in the bounds of nature is broken and they become enormous, depraved, abject. The appetites of animals are directed by unchangeable instinct which keeps them in lines con-

ducive to life. But the body of man, when the nobler part is lost, hurries its victim on and on in the wildest excesses to "the thing unnatural." This was so in the days of Paul, who describes its shuddering horror in the first chapter of Romans, the full truthfulness of which is verified in all the ancient Latin and Greek histories and poetry.

The boast that "Nature is religion enough for me" is shallowness itself, for nature does not give the power to refuse the thing it thunders is damnable. Nature's law without God is fiendish, for it proclaims, "Do this and you will be damned; but you cannot help but do it." But, thank God, there is no nature's law without God. He who made all this is in it. And he who, in defiance of what is taught in this code, ignores God will find the power of nature that would have exalted him hurling him into the bottomless pit of his own filth. It is a law which none can escape: "As thou makest thy God, such wilt thou make thyself."

A second way in which this great truth we have stated, that impurity is more than a natural calamity, is seen in the fact that it withers the soul. Lacordaire, the great French friar, who spent many years in trying to rescue his countrymen from what was

threatening to become the national sin, said: "I have studied multitudes of men in my long life, and I declare to you that I have never met with genuine tenderness of heart in one addicted to debauchery. I have never met with loving souls but in such as were ignorant of the evil or were struggling against it." Have we not all seen how surely and how quickly it deadens conscience, dulls the intellect, and rushes its victim on to imbecility and idiocy? Ah, the law of purity is not simply a moral law to be regulated by nature alone. It is a spiritual law to receive its breath from the lips of God. Thus again we say that from out of the Levitical law emerges this great principle—*Holiness to the Lord*.

3. *Sacrifices*. The bulk of the Levitical law has to do with the sacrifices. It is an elaborate system in which every detail has its meaning. All that we can do, however, in this study, is to name its general truth, that only by atonement for sin through the shedding of blood can sinful man come into fellowship with the Holy One. Even before the sacerdotal system was prepared this principle was anticipated. The fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had their altars. We have familiarized ourselves with the meaning of the passover

with its bleeding lamb. When the covenant law was proclaimed from Sinai it was amid smoke, lightning flashes, thunder, and earthquake shocks. Such was the terror of the system of holiness by obedience that even Moses "exceedingly quaked and trembled." All that indicates the terrible exposures and inevitable perils of an economy of salvation by law. The utter impossibility of it was indicated when Moses as the mediator sprinkled the book of the law and the people with sacrificial blood. Holiness was impossible save through atonement.

This is the principle which the bloody offerings of Leviticus elaborate, all of which typify Him who taught, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

The burnt offering, selected from the domestic animals without blemish, not taken from the chase, and the whole consumed on the altar, foreshadowed the true offering; near us, spotless, freely consenting, and wholly given to God. Christ is the burnt offering.

The peace offering, in which the greater part of the victim was eaten by the worshiper, also typifies Him who is the food of our souls, by participating in which we have fellowship

with God. But in our eating is present this constant fact: our life is sustained only by the death of Another. There is no union with God but by the shed blood of Him who supplies that life.

The sin offering made provision for particular acts of wrong which were graded from sins of ignorance to more serious wrongs, all of which required infinite wisdom to settle in equity. And this offering also typified Him who could not pass by without expiation the simplest misdemeanor, and whose love provided for "the bruised reed and smoking flax."

The trespass offerings were made for special acts of sin which required a special cost in the redemption. Certain sins brought the sinner under the burden of great obligation difficult and even impossible to repay. Such were met in these offerings, all of which prefigured Him "who is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him."

All of these offerings were akin and yet different, showing the various sides of the great redemption we have in Christ. Thus "in the burnt offering Christ is our *righteousness* in full consecration; in the sin offering, he is the *expiation* for our sins; in the peace offering he is our *life*; in the trespass offering

he makes *satisfaction* and plenary reparation in our behalf to God." Satisfaction, expiation, righteousness, life—all this is ours in the cross.

III. THE EFFECT OF THE LEVITICAL CODE ON THE PEOPLE TO WHOM IT WAS GIVEN WAS TWOFOLD.

First, *it revealed the eternal truth embodied in the ancient "law of the covenant" to those who were ready to receive it, and so prepared the way for the gospel of Christ.*

The historic figures of this class are not so many, for the reason that they, by the very fact of their liberation from the set forms of the Church, were not in hearty favor with the ruling classes, who feared the breaking down of their system and with it their authority. "If we let this man go, we lose our place and nation," is a cry that antedated the time of our Lord by many centuries.

Among these spiritual luminaries were the prophets and psalmists, who voiced the mighty heartthrobs of conviction and life and inspiration. It rolled out with the charm of heaven's own music in the ears of those who were weary of the deadening rattle of ecclesiastical machinery. These heroes of a real inward reli-

gion would at times speak contemptuously of the prevailing worship as "a weariness and an abomination," and they spoke of it thus because it was secular, mechanical, unfruitful, the tomb rather than the garden of religion. These men, furthermore, by the vision of their insight, discovered the glorious reality when, in the coming ages, all this shell should fall away and holiness would be written not alone on altars and priestly garments but on counters and anvils and peasants' blouses and kings' ermine. The time was coming when all secular life was to be holy, and even "the bells on the horses" would be engraved with the sacred word. This was the Messianic vision; and the central figure in it all was "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

A second effect of this ecclesiastical legislation is not so pleasant to consider, but is necessary because the ancient peril threatens the modern Church. *It created a class of religionists known as Pharisees, men who, under the plea of preserving the ancient religion, exalted to a first rank what originally was only secondary and educational.* When religion fails to produce saints, men and women with the inward power of a holy life, it reverts to the past and recalls the practices of the ages.

It names the mighty men of old and erects for them monuments, and religion becomes a hero worship. If those Jewish Pharisees in honoring Moses had only studied his lofty spirit, it would have been well; but when they exalted a mere matter of form which he gave for the purpose of leading men back into the free life of communion with God to the rank of an essential and final rite they turned religion for themselves and others into a stage performance. They became hypocrites. The word means "actors." Brothers, religion is not that. It is the life of God in the souls of men, a power of eternal evolution, expanding more and more into the beauty of holiness.

XV

KADESH-BARNEA

Deut. 1. 19: "And we came to Kadesh-barnea."

KADESH-BARNEA is a place of sad suggestion to Israel. It was the gateway which God threw open for his elect people to enter the land of promise. But Israel never passed through. Driven back by divine wrath, they spent those forty weary years in "that great and terrible wilderness."

There is some diversity of sentiment as to the site of this celebrated place, but there is an undivided thought as to its spiritual meaning and it is of that I would speak. There is a Kadesh-barnea in the history of us all—a point to which we come under the divine leadership, where we stand on the border of a better life. What we do there will determine whether ours is to be a Canaan or a wilderness life.

There are multitudes whose spiritual life is nothing but a wilderness experience—vast stretches of hot gravel, barren, rocky crags, suggesting more of terror than inspiration, an

occasional blooming oasis where we are not allowed to remain—the pillar of flame moves on, and, following God, we tramp the cheerless wastes.

And yet right up against our wilderness is a lovely land of rest. I do not speak of heaven, but a possible experience, which can be described as the land of Canaan. Instead of the endless spread of blistering sands there are valleys through which flow rivers of living waters. Instead of crags stripped of verdure there are hillsides clad with vineyards and orchards. There are grapes of Eshcol, pomegranates, figs, and olives. There are gardens of flowers, and bees and birds; there breathes the breath both of ocean and mountain. It is a goodly land—a land of rest.

And all this God has promised to us. For this very purpose he called us out of our bondage. As he called Israel out of Egypt, not to give them a wilderness but Canaan, so he called us not for a wilderness life, but for promised rest. Would you who have not entered into that rest know why? Let the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tell you: "While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did

provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

Unbelief—that is the secret of the failure at Kadesh-barnea. Let us study this history and try ourselves to avoid the fatal mistake and sin of those who provoke God.

I. This unbelief is seen, first of all, IN THE REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE TO SEND SPIES TO SEARCH OUT THE LAND, AFTER GOD HAD COMMANDED THEM TO GO AND POSSESS IT. You remember how the pillar of cloud had brought the people safely over the desert of Paran up to Kadesh-barnea, near the southern border of Canaan; and how halting for a moment, Moses said: "Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it,

as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged" (Deut. 1. 20, 21).

Now, that ought to have been final with Israel. It matters not whether the land be a good land or not; the thing for them was to go. The question whether it be difficult or easy should never enter their hearts. They must go. They should never ask if it be possible to take the land. They should take it. General Kilpatrick, during our Civil War, commanded one of his colonels to take a fortified hill which was held by the enemy. The colonel replied, "I'll try." "I did not ask you to try," said the general, "I command you to take it." "I'll do it or die," answered the colonel. "No," said Kilpatrick, "I gave no orders for you to die. Let there be no alternative. Just take it." The general might have miscalculated, but God never. Faith does not wait for explanations. It just obeys. It proceeds in the face of the apparently impossible,

Laughs at impossibilities

And cries, "It shall be done."

But Israel, instead of obeying, said, "We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what

way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come." That very halting indicates a fatal unfaith. It is wicked unbelief, though disguised by words of apparent wisdom. Even Moses was deceived by the disguise, for he said, "The saying pleased me well" (Deut. 1. 23).

But lift the veil and we see at once the real heart of unbelief: unbelief in God's word—for had he not said it was "a good land flowing with milk and honey"? (Exod. 3. 8)—and unbelief in God's leadership, for to search out the way of entrance for themselves was to distrust the pillar of cloud and flame which was to guide them. When the voice of duty is unmistakable it is a perilous thing to stop and consider. When God commands it is not for us to seek whether it be wise or safe, nor even whether it be possible. Commands are not to be questioned, but obeyed. There was profound wisdom in the faith of that old colored man who, when asked if God should command him to jump through a stone wall would he do it, replied, "I'se noffin' to say 'bout going froo, but I'd jump at it." When God calls you to enter the land of spiritual rest he commands you first to drive out those godless occupants which make rest impossible—those

filthy lusts, those carnal appetites, those unholy tempers, those murderous greeds—those Amorites, and Hittites, and Hivites, which infest the land.

The more we consider the strength and number of these sceptered forces within us, the more does it seem utterly impossible for us to conquer the land for the kingdom of God. And, indeed, without God it is actually impossible. To ignore him is unbelief, and we enter not in because of it. But if we just believe God and go ahead, it is astonishing how one after another of these dominions will go down before our triumphant approach. Take a single instance: Moses is commonly accepted as the meekest man in all the world. But how came he to be so meek? Naturally he is one of the most violent, headstrong, irritable men whom we have ever carefully studied. See him in Egypt, when, in sudden wrath, he draws his sword and slays the Egyptian. See him at the well of Midian, when he flies to the defense of Jethro's daughters. See him when, in the passionate violence of his wrath, he smashes the tables of stone on which God's finger had traced the law. See him at Meribah, when, with patience exhausted, he, with unrestrained irritation, strikes the rock. I can-

not think of Moses as a man with a soft, smooth, white face, gentle eyes, and countenance beaming with meekness. The true ideal is given by Angelo in his immortal marble—a face massive and ribbed and bearded, a mouth that makes you tremble lest he might speak to you—eyes that flash out suggestions, as the crater of Vesuvius flashes out hot rocks that strike as well as burn. The calm of his mighty countenance is like that which Kingsley describes of Augustine of Hippo, “the calm of a worn-out volcano, over which centuries must pass before the earthquake ruts be filled with kindly soil and the cinder slopes grow gay with grass and flowers.”

Moses’s meekness was not an inheritance, but a conquest. The power by which he made the conquest was his *faith*. He believed God—his goodness, his wisdom, his providence. And with that belief he could keep calm. He acts with deliberation, and perfect confidence of the result. When for a single moment his trust in God is shaken he loses self-control. The old nature asserts itself again and the volcano belches forth its rocks and fire. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

II. THE SENDING OUT THE SPIES, ORIGINATING
IN UNBELIEF, CAN END ONLY IN DISASTER.

The result was twofold:

1. *A divided opinion which unfitted them for conquest.* These spies, after forty days' search, returned, agreed as to the excellence of the land, but divided as to the possibility of taking it. Read the account:

So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebu-

sites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. (Num. 13. 21-33.)

Brothers, when we start a search into the kingdom of God with a view of information rather than obedience, the result will be just this: "It is a splendid thing—no doubt all true—but ten to two it can never be realized. What conception could possibly be more sublime than this—a perfect manhood, in a country where mountain, ocean, valley and sky give the best of nature's gifts, the last remnant of the depraved races exterminated? A beautiful picture, but purely Utopian—an impossible ideal." Is there anything more sublime than an ideal Christian?—all the enmities within banished, all the foes without conquered, the outer world transformed by the change wrought within.

His name yields the richest perfume,
 And sweeter than music his voice;
 His presence disperses my gloom,
 And makes all within me rejoice;
 I should, were he always thus nigh,
 Have nothing to wish or to fear;
 No mortal so happy as I,
 My summer would last all the year.

Content with beholding his face,
 My all to his pleasure resigned,
 No changes of season or place
 Would make any change in my mind;
 While blest with a sense of his love,
 A palace a toy would appear;
 And prisons would palaces prove,
 If Jesus would dwell with me there.

That is magnificent, but, say the ten, where is it to be found? Not only the world, but you yourselves confess you are not that. It is a land beautiful indeed, but one you cannot take. If Joshua and Caleb stand up and say, "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey; only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not," then the ten reply, "There

are walled cities, and the giants are there." These walled cities! 'Tis useless to try to take them.

You merchants, for instance, how can you give that attention to business that is required for success and at the same time give that attention to the cultivation of religion which is needed to secure the land just described? You mothers, with prayerless husbands, can you face the frowning walls of duty without sympathy at home? And those giants! I have already described them. That giant appetite, that temper, that impatience, that ambition—O, how many they are and how thoroughly fortified in our nature! "I tell you," say all but Caleb and Joshua, "you cannot take the land."

This is almost sure to be the result when we make the things of the divine life simply matters to be thought about and not obeyed. Divine truth fades away into a splendid dream, a vague thing of imagination, but utterly impracticable. A Christian woman told me that her husband could never be a Christian because he had no imagination. "You and I know," said she, "how it is through our imagination and feelings we can take great comfort in the idea of religion, but a practical,

sensible man like my husband can never be pleased with such delusions."

Do you ask why do not these men to whom religion has become only a solemn mockery abandon it? I reply, Why did declining paganism cling to the superstitions which it despised? Why do men prefer a debased or confessedly false religion to none at all? Ah, there is in us all an intuition—a sort of discernment of the fact that it is better to have a high ideal, though unattainable, than none at all. To let go that, the light in us becomes darkness, and our course is downward over the dark avenue of unbelief—animalism, death.

2. Another result of sending out the spies is that *God's wrath condemns us back into the wilderness*, where our divine life consists of weary pilgrimages over barren sands. Listen to the awful doom of the Israelites:

Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the

valley.) To morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea. (Num. 14. 22-25.)

How sickening! Forty years in that howling wilderness—a whole generation perishing. It makes me sick to think so many of us are there when a Canaan of rest is prepared for us and open for us. I do not say you are cast off. Moses interceded for his people and God forgave them (Num. 14. 19, 20). So too, we have a divine Intercessor, who “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” God forgives you; but so long as you are unbelieving you cannot enter into rest. But I summon you again to Kadesh-barnea. Some of us have crossed the border. We have not yet conquered *all* the inhabitants of the land. The command was, “Little by little.” But, according to the promise, they are giving way. The land is ours.

XVI

THE DEATH OF MOSES

Deut. 34. 5, 6: "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."

THE sublime death of Moses is a very fitting theme with which to close our studies of the Exodus. In presenting this theme the first point I make is:

I. MOSES DIED.

1. Commonplace as that statement is, I make it because there are many whose fancy is *that Moses, like Enoch and Elijah, was translated*. But in opposition to that view are two fatal facts: The Scriptures repeatedly affirm that he died (Deut. 32. 50; 34. 5; Josh. 1. 1, 2). Lest we take this as a convenient form of expression to say that he went hence, having no reference to the manner of his going, we are distinctly told that "he was gathered to his fathers, even as Aaron" (Num. 27. 13). And there is no question as to the

fact that Aaron died after the fashion of what we call death. Moses's death was a punishment for his sin at Meribah (Num. 27. 14). How absurd for us to say that God punished a man by translating him! That makes the penalty of sin to be the deliverance from its curse. We are driven, then, from all our fancies to the stern fact that our hero actually died.

2. But what a death! As we review its details we are constrained *to call it by some other term than this one so suggestive of sorrow and defeat—a curse*. Not permitted to call it a translation or an ascension, let us call it a triumphant entrance into life. This is the hour in which Moses realized that grand consummation for which Paul longed—"mortality swallowed up of life."

Let us review the particulars: The hosts of Israel had pushed their march through hostile lands on the east of the Dead Sea—and with victory perched upon their banners, were now encamped in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan, just on the threshold of the land God covenanted to give to his people. And now the summons comes to the hero of this great movement (Num. 27. 12-14): "And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount

Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin."

To appreciate that order we must remember how intensely Moses longed to enter the land of his people and establish the nation there. He believed that that was his mission in life. For this he was eighty years in preparation. For this he had devoted the forty years of his prime. How bitter the disappointment was to him appears partly in his prayer when God told him he could not enter Canaan: "O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon" (Deut. 3. 24, 25). It also is seen partly in the fact that this privation lay an oppressive weight upon his mind from the moment of its announce-

ment. There is no event of his history of which he speaks so often as this. It is constantly in his mind, and he speaks of it with remarkable frequency and pathos. He will not plead with God to yield, after he has said to him, "Speak no more unto me of this matter" (Deut. 3. 26), yet he cannot cast it off his heart. It seems like the failure of his life purpose.

There is another thing we cannot overlook. Though Moses was one hundred and twenty years of age, he was in the fullness of physical health and strength. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." His love of life had not been weakened either by the failure of his plans or by physical suffering. The victorious banners of Israel were even now spread by the breezes wafted from the land of promise, and the instinct of life was proportioned to the fullness of his physical force. He was no morbid man, wishing to die, but vigorous with love of life. But with every earthly reason to want to live, see how he meets death.

First of all, his heart turns to his people with wondrous depth of sympathy, and he spends several days in instructing them. He delivers to them that series of discourses which

we read in Deuteronomy, in which the great man reviews and comments upon the history and law and destiny of Israel. This book, as its name, Deuteronomy, indicates, is sometimes called "the second law." But that is misleading. It is only a copy of the great lawgiver's exhortations and comments on the old law, which he gives to his people as he is about to finally leave them. After this Moses delivers his commission to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee" (Deut. 31. 23). This done, he gathers all the elders of Israel together and pronounces the magnificent psalm recorded in Deut. 32, a psalm of which one competent to judge has said, "The shout of thanksgiving and the song of joy alternate with the roll of terror which sounds as if the thunder of Sinai were reverberating anew." He whom I have just quoted (Dr. Taylor) in speaking elsewhere of this song says: "This psalm for poetic sublimity, for holy expostulation, for devout piety, and for solemn power has never been surpassed. He praises Jehovah with the fervor of a seraph and pleads with the people with the tenderness of a father. Now the strains are soft and low, as if they

came from the chords of an Æolian harp in the stillness of the gentle summer eve; anon they are loud and stormful, as if some gust of passionate intensity had come sweeping over his spirit; now they are joyous with the recollection of Jehovah's mercies, and again they are terrible with the echoes of Sinai's thunder, when he rolls out the fearful doom that must attend the after apostasy of the chosen people."

After this he bids them adieu and begins the ascent of the mount of death. The weeping people watch him till at last his form is lost to their sight. He sees the encampment below him—the goodly tents, the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar resting upon it. He continues to climb till he reaches the Pisgah summit, and then the sacred land stretches out before him, a magnificent panorama. Far up to the north he sees the beautiful Hermon with its snowy head and its shoulders wrapped in blue and white clouds. He can trace the Jordan till it falls into the sea. Far off to the west are the sea and the sky. Beneath his feet are the city of the palm trees and the happy fields the posterity of Joseph was to inhabit. Beyond extend the whole range of the mountains of Palestine—the round summits of Ebal and Gerizim, the wide opening where lay Es-

draelon, the future battlefield of nations. History adds to the charm of every landscape. Moses saw the fields of the mightiest events of history, which his faith anticipated, namely, those of the redemption scheme. Amid that entrancing view he lies down and his deathless spirit sweeps away into the—unknown.

And had he not high honor?—

The hillside for his pall,
 To lie in state while angels wait,
 With stars for tapers tall;
 And the dark rock pines like tossing plumes
 Over his bier to wave;
 And God's own hand in that lonely land,
 To lay him in the grave.

Many centuries later his feet touch the lovely Hermon, which on the day of his death delighted his eyes. Do you ask how came he there in bodily form with the translated Elijah? I think we have the key to the explanation in Jude 9:

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” It is thought that that means—he who had the power of death was compelled to yield the body of Moses to a resurrection before the last day.

3. *Is that death?* If so, then our popular conceptions are all wrong. Our own vision of the fact has been so obscured by our tears as that we have utterly misconceived its meaning. We symbolize it with the skull and bones; we call it a cold river, a valley of shadows, a destroyer, and other ugly names. Brothers, it is only a transit—and a very short one—only a line over which we step from mortality into immortality. Death is a tunneled rock. We plunge into it from this side where are marshes and miasma; then we have darkness and noise and smoke and oppression—but wait. It is only for a little while. Soon we emerge on the other side. Then, lo! the river of life, the harbor of glory, the domes and spires of the city of God.

A young minister in passing out of his house was asked by his servant, "What do you think of sudden death?" Pausing a moment, he said, "To a Christian it is sudden glory." His body was brought in, a corpse; but it was a comfort to those who loved him that to him it was "sudden glory." Cookman, dying, said, "I am sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb." Bishop Haven: "There is no river; I rise, I float away. O, Glory!" Paul: "To die is gain." Jesus speaks

of the time of his agony and death: "The time of my glorification."

It is not death to die—
 To leave this weary road,
 And, 'mid the brotherhood on high,
 To be at home with God.

It is not death to close
 The eye long dimmed by tears,
 And wake, in glorious repose
 To spend eternal years.

It is not death to bear
 The wrench that sets us free
 From dungeon chain, to breathe the air
 Of boundless liberty.

It is not death to fling
 Aside this sinful dust,
 And rise, on strong exulting wing,
 To live among the just.

Jesus, thou Prince of Life,
 Thy chosen cannot die!
 Like thee, they conquer in the strife,
 To reign with thee on high.

II. Sublime as is the death of Moses, it has one feature which mars its perfection, namely, IT RENDERS AN OTHERWISE SPLENDID LIFE INCOMPLETE. To our view his death is untimely. It cuts short a story when it is only two thirds told. It is like the root of a flower which aspires toward consummate beauty for months, and then withers without realizing its promise.

The history of Moses perplexes us with its confusing incompleteness. But concerning that fact, let me rapidly say three things.

1. There is but one *complete* life in human history. Only one man at death, in speaking of his lifework, could say, "It is finished." He came, first, to realize in his own person a perfect humanity, and this he did in his life. Secondly, to effect a reconciliation of God with a lost race, and this he did in his death. Both his life and death were a finished work. And so, in the moment of his departure, he cried, "It is finished." But rarely if ever is a gifted man permitted to finish that for which he was fitted. Every Moses who originates a great scheme of usefulness and blessing can only come up to the point where he can see "It is coming"; but some Joshua must bring it in. Stanley, in speaking of this fact, says it is true in intellectual as in spiritual matters, and thus quotes Macaulay's celebrated allusion to Bacon's great work in philosophy:

Bacon

Did on the very border stand
Of the blessed promised land;

And from the mountain's top of his exalted wit
Saw it himself and showed us it;

But life did never to one man allow

Time to discover worlds and conquer too.

The story of the great benefactors of the world reads like that of Moses. They saw the goodly land, but they did not enter in. How do the pages of biography tell the story of the incompleteness of individual life? Socrates, Savonarola, Huss, Xavier, Lincoln, and thousands of men like these, have died right on the border of the good for which they lived. Like the Old Testament saints, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, . . . that they without us should not be made perfect." Every man that gets much ahead of his time must be content to pay the penalty of all prophets, namely, to die before his vision is realized.

2. A second thing—*the life of Moses was made incomplete because of his sin.* (1) To us apparently his sin was only a trifle; to God it was in reality enormous. No sin is trifling. One act of disobedience lost a world. One sin, unrepented of, will damn a soul. But some sins are more deadly than others. John draws a strong distinction between sins: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray

for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John 5. 16, 17).

Some sins are confined to the sphere of our lower life. They originate and spend their force on the plane of our earthly being. They are mortal. Others have their history in the sphere of our spiritual life. They are called "spiritual wickednesses." They poison the very springs of our being. Others soil the stream; these the fountain. Only those who come into rare heavenly privileges can sin in this dreadful way. He only who has the divine gift can prostitute it. He can ravish the chastity of heaven. How solemn are the words: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6. 4-6).

Now, Moses was wondrously blessed of God. He talked face to face with him. He received directly from him the words of truth. He was specially intrusted with miraculous powers, which powers are safe only in the hands of one

whose will acts only within the scope of the divine will. A divine energy must be controlled by divine wisdom, else it carries ruin. To let loose the forces that play about us in the natural world would devastate nature. Only when kept within the limits of law—that is, God's will—are they beneficent. If so in the realm natural, how much more so in the realm spiritual! O, it would be indescribably awful for a divine power which God was using in his redemption history to slip from the track of divine law, and go cavorting under the rein of a wicked passion. Alas for the man who has been intrusted with the supernatural powers, if he exercises those powers with an ungodly spirit in a way that God forbids. Yet that was what Moses did. In the passion of his wrath he flung out his sacred power upon the rock at Meribah. It was a deathly sin and must be severely punished, else the effect both on himself and the people will be incalculable, especially in the secularization of the divine life. The cutting short of the life of Moses was a curse infinitely to be preferred to the perversion of the religious consciousness. Severe as it was, it was a merciful punishment.

(2) He sinned as a representative. He

must suffer as such. He personally was forgiven, but before the people he must suffer penalty.

3. I make one more remark concerning the incompleteness of life. Though Moses did not possess the land, *he did achieve that which is a thousand times better, namely, a character.* We make a great mistake in viewing our life's history as if its success depended on our achievements here. And that man who is balked at every step and at last can point to nothing which he has done as a success, makes a mistake if he calls his life a failure. It is not necessarily so. Some of the greatest failures in outward life are the greatest successes in the manhood attained—in the exalting spirit it has thrown into them. I know a man whose life has been balked from his boyhood up to this present hour. With rare gifts, he seemed destined to fill a large place in his day and country. But whatever he undertook, some event which could not have been anticipated occurred to thwart him. Accidents, sickness, financial misfortunes occurred in quick succession until at last, when nearly fifty years old, he stands, as the world says, with nothing achieved. And so it would seem, until you come in contact with the man.

There, in himself, is the achievement of his life.

The life of Moses comes to a premature close, if we measure only by what was done before the eyes of men. But when we remember the majestic character he achieved we can hardly call its death premature. That sublime death of his, with its holy submission, its triumphant courage—its divinity—has done more to uplift the race than the conquest of a thousand Canaans.

How strange! Dying men, rather than conquerors, are the world's saviours.

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

A032415

DS
121
T9

Tuttle, Alexander Harrison, 1844
Egypt to Canaan : or lectures
spiritual meanings of the exodus
A. H. Tuttle. -- New York : Eaton
Mains, c1912.
286 p. ; 20 cm.

1. Jews--History--To entrance
Canaan--Addresses, essays, lectu
I. Title

A 032415

CCSC 14 SEP 79 1228338 CSTMxc 12

